FILM

MISCELLANY

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"A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH." Photo: Archers.

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Cover. MARTHA SCOTT, who has recently visited England to appear in "So Well Remembered" from the novel by James Hilton, first came into prominence when she gave an exquisite performance in the film of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town." Born in Jamesport, she had a distinguished career on Broadway before going to Hollywood to appear in the film version of the play which made her name. She left Hollywood in 1943 after appearing with Cary Grant in "Tree of Liberty," with William Gargan in "Cheers For Miss Bishop," with George Brent in "They Dare Not Love" and with Fredric March in "One Foot In Heaven." Since then she has been acting on the New York stage in such hits as "The Voice of the Turtle" and "Soldier's Wife." The new organization, Alliance Productions, formed by J. Arthur Rank of Britain and R.K.O Radio of Hollywood, signed her to appear opposite John Mills in their first transatlantic production to be made at Denham, and in this film Martha plays a Bette Davis role, which should bring her back to the position she held in Hollywood, of being one of the finest of the younger American film actresses.

"SPECTRE OF THE ROSE."

Photo: British L

Ten years ago Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, two young screenwriters, left Hollywood to make independent pictures in New York. After producing, writing and directing four films they returned to California. Now Republic has given Hecht the opportunity to write, produce and direct "Spectre of the Rose," an unusual and worth-while effort. Above are Judith Anderson, Michael Chekhov and Viola Essen as they appear in the film.

PREAMBLE

BY THE EDITOR

1946 is a year of festivals. The International Film Festival was held in Cannes in September, while at the same time in Prague the Czechoslovakian film workers organised a British Films Festival to which were invited some forty representatives of British films, including prominent actors, writers, producers and directors. The films shown in Prague included *Henry V*, *Brief Encounter*, *Men of Two Worlds* and *Western Approaches*. Richard Winnington, film critic of the *News Chronicle*, described in that paper the wonderful welcome given to our productions and suggests that we organise a Czech Film Festival in London next year, in order to help weld together the cultural forces in both countries. There is something in this idea.

Here in England the festival spirit has also been apparent. The New London Film Society opened a season of great American films with screenings of Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Clarence Brown's *Anna Christie* and Victor Seastrom's *The Wind*. And in 1947 the Society will show such other outstanding American classics as F. W. Murnau's *Sunrise*, Josef von Sternberg's *Underworld*, King Vidor's *The Big Parade*, D. W. Griffith's *Orphans of the Storm* and Erich von Stroheim's *Foolish Wives*. For those interested, the address of the New London Film Society, which gives its performances on Sundays at the Scala, is 4, St. James's Place, London, S.W.1, and the Secretary is Olwen Vaughn.

This Society recently organised a Festival of French Films, to celebrate fifty years of French cinema. During this season, also at the Scala, a dozen films were shown, some of which were celebrated classics like René Clair's *The Italian Straw Hat*, while the rest were new films by such as Marcel Carné and Erich von Stroheim, shown in England for the first time. Then there is the Cinema Club, a new organisation headed by Roger Manvell, which opened its 1946-47 season with Germaine Dulac's *The Seashell and the Clergyman* and Seastrom's *Thy Soul Shall Bear Witness*. Later on D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, Fritz Lang's *Siegfreid* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Blackmail* will be shown. Roger Manvell says that the aim of the Cinema Club, with headquarters at the Hammer Theatre, Wardour Street, W.1, is "to show not only the masterpieces of film art but examples of its phases of development, its experiments—and even its more interesting mistakes."

And that is not all. Unity Theatre organised an Autumn Season of Great Films which included Jean Renoir's *La Bête*

Humaine, James Cruze's *The Covered Wagon*, Lewis Milestone's *Of Mice and Men*, *Song of Ceylon* by Basil Wright and *Spanish Earth* by Joris Ivens. The Unity organisers certainly showed a fine catholic spirit, for one could see during their season the classics like Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* vying with a modern example like Michael Powell's and Emeric Pressburger's *49th Parallel*. All this represents a healthy development towards a wider appreciation of the cinema. The Festivals at Cannes and Prague mark the coming of age of the films as an art, while the various festivals organised here are an indication that a large audience exists who want to see good films, who want to enjoy the classic films of the silent days as well as the best of the present-day era. We of this magazine welcome all moves which will help to widen understanding and increase the appreciation of young film-goers. This time next year the Association of Ciné-Technicians, we hope, will have followed the fine example set by the Czechs and organise an International Film Festival in London to which may be invited the leading figures from world film industries. Such a move can only be beneficial and lead to greater international understanding. Certainly the film itself represents one of the greatest of ambassadorial powers. Used with insight and intelligence it can bring into being an International Federation and give to each nation a new understanding of the problems of its neighbours.

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That Festival !

JAMES AGATE, our special correspondent, reports on the International Film Festival at Cannes

"THEY manage these things better in France" has always been my favourite misquotation. Recent experience has proved to me that no one can say with truth that they order this matter of a Film Festival better than in France. My adventures from leaving these shores until my return were a succession of fiascos and misfires. My friend and I were the guests of the French Government, wherefore we left all arrangements in their hands. That was the great mistake. The trouble started at the Gare de Lyon where we were told that at nine-thirty p.m. we must take the special train for Cannes on which there would be a dining-car. There wasn't. Now I had suspected that there might not be, and had taken the precaution of arranging to present ourselves an hour-and-a-half before time, thus enabling us to snatch a bite in that dining-room which combines magnificence and ugliness with maximum felicity.

Arrived at Cannes we found that we had been brought there two days too early, and that there was nothing to claim our attention except the blue imbecility of the sea and the brown bodies of the disgustingly rich. Then the Festival opened and the next problem was how to obtain tickets. Somebody had them, but each buzzing official that we approached thought it must be some other of his twenty-four buzzing colleagues. So we watched the more fortunate, who had got hold of tickets somehow, flock into the Casino where the proceedings were opened with *Cæsar and Cleopatra*. Keeping stiff upper lips my friend and I turned ourselves away, and took a taxi to a little restaurant where we lunched off melon, twelve kinds of *hors-d'oeuvres*, rougets, veal cutlets, Camembert, fruit, a bottle of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, coffee and brandy—at the very reasonable price of fifty shillings a head. On our return we found Cannes half dead with boredom. Vivien Leigh was adjudged to be very pretty, but what had all the talk been about, and who wanted to listen to it anyway? No. This was a flop. And not even a flop *d'estime*. We spent the rest of that afternoon chasing our tickets for the evening performance.

Our hearts sank to our boots when the first thing we saw on entering the Casino was a notice prohibiting smoking. (It appears that you can't smoke in any cinema in France.) The film was a Mexican presentation of *The Three Musketeers.* Not a straight dramatisation of the old thing—which would have bored me stiff anyhow—but a burlesque version with an actor called Cantinflas doing the Bob Hope stuff. The whole thing was in Spanish, there were no sub-titles, and the Mexican comedian didn't seem to me to be funny or look as though he could be funny at any time in any thing. After two hours of this my friend and I decided to take a smoke and a drink at the *Café de la Jetée,* where a lively little orchestra of eight instruments was doing its best with Liszt, Wagner, Bizet and Ravel. We had two drinks, perhaps three, and sauntered back to the Casino outside which hundreds of people were strolling. Was the film over? Was it the interval? No. The film was not over. And it was not the interval. Three-quarters of the audience were preferring the fresh-air to the boredom within. At half-past twelve this monstrous piece of stupidity came to an end amid ironic cheers. They then started on the U.S.A. presentation of Alfred Hitchcock's *Notorious,* featuring Cary Grant, Claude Rains and Ingrid Bergman. My friend and I gazed at one another with a blank surmise; though both of us understand the American language better than the Mexican we could make nothing whatever of the picture. Some time towards one o'clock in the morning the picture suddenly stopped and an announcement was made that it would be re-started as they had begun with the second reel instead of the first. Wherefore my friend and I wended our way to our hotel, sadder if not wiser men. The following evening was devoted to a Russian film, *Le Tournant Décisif,* of which we could not make head or tail, except that a lot of hirsute ruffians seemed to be fighting another lot of hirsute ruffians, all of them Russians. There was an immense amount of shouting and gesticulating, but about what it was impossible to discover.

On the third evening cinematic activity was suspended in favour of a Battle of Flowers, which was charming. There is a gaiety about your Southern Frenchman which is wholly contrary to British phlegm. On the evening of the Battle we were dining in a little restaurant—only fools dine at the big establishments—called *Le Corsaire.* Suddenly the waiters vanished, to reappear ten minutes later as naked, or nearly naked, pirates. At that moment a lorry disguised as a frigate drew up and with wild whoops the waiters jumped into it and left us to settle our bills as and if we thought proper. Yes, the Battle was an enchanting spectacle, the only contribution lacking in taste being that of a British film company which I decline to particularise. After the Battle came a display of fireworks, and an enchanting evening came to an end with whiskey at nineteen shillings a double and vintage champagne at twenty-two and sixpence a bottle.

The fourth day found us back again at the treadmill. The film, called *The Letter,* was Danish. It was all about a young man who, banging his head against a sun-blind, recovers conscious-

ness to find his young woman taking morphia. On this occasion there was a synopsis in English. This ended:—

> The Chief Physician Toft is standing on his balcony beside Poul who is slowly coming to himself;—he lost consciousness after the collision with the sun-blind—he has lived through all this during his state of unconsciousness;—Toft smiles and tells him to go in and dance with Gerd.—"Where is your wife?" asks Poul. "My wife!" replies Toft, "Gerd is not my wife; she is my niece!"—It was a dream!

It wasn't! It was a nightmare! And a daft one at that! We got back to our hotel to find the invitation to official receptions held two or three days previously.

And now started the business of getting home, since I had an engagement to look at certain of the Paris theatres. Came a Sunday when we had booked seats on a plane for Paris, and we sat in the aerodrome from noon till dusk, no airplane arriving. When we got back to the hotel we found a note praying us not to present ourselves at the aerodrome that day as in view of an aviation meeting all civil flying had been cancelled. They begged to offer us one seat on a Paris train in a week's time, another a week later. We got two more seats on another plane leaving on the following Thursday at two in the afternoon. Starting leisurely to pack my things I found a letter on my dressing-table informing me that the director of the company had cancelled our seats in favour of two on another plane starting earlier, at eight a.m., in fact. I did not discover the note till the plane had been an hour in the air! On the following Sunday at a cost of twenty thousand francs we booked two seats on an air-liner flying direct from Nice to London. We arrived at Nice to find no air-liner but a privately-owned, converted Czechoslovakian war-plane which would take us as far as Paris where arrangements would be made by telephone from Nice to tranship us. Well, we flew to Paris and landed at Le Bourget to find that nobody had heard of us. How about the telephone message? It was explained to us that doubtless the Nice office had not realised that the Paris office was closed on Sundays. It took us three days to get away from Paris. We have to thank my dress-clothes, six shirts, a hat, a pair of evening shoes and half of my friend's wardrobe that we did not starve. Why did we not see more of the Festival films? Because, on the Sunday of our first attempt to leave, we tore up our Press tickets, and to get these renewed was beyond the industry, ingenuity and charm of two bloody fools of Englishmen. No! They do not order these matters better in France!

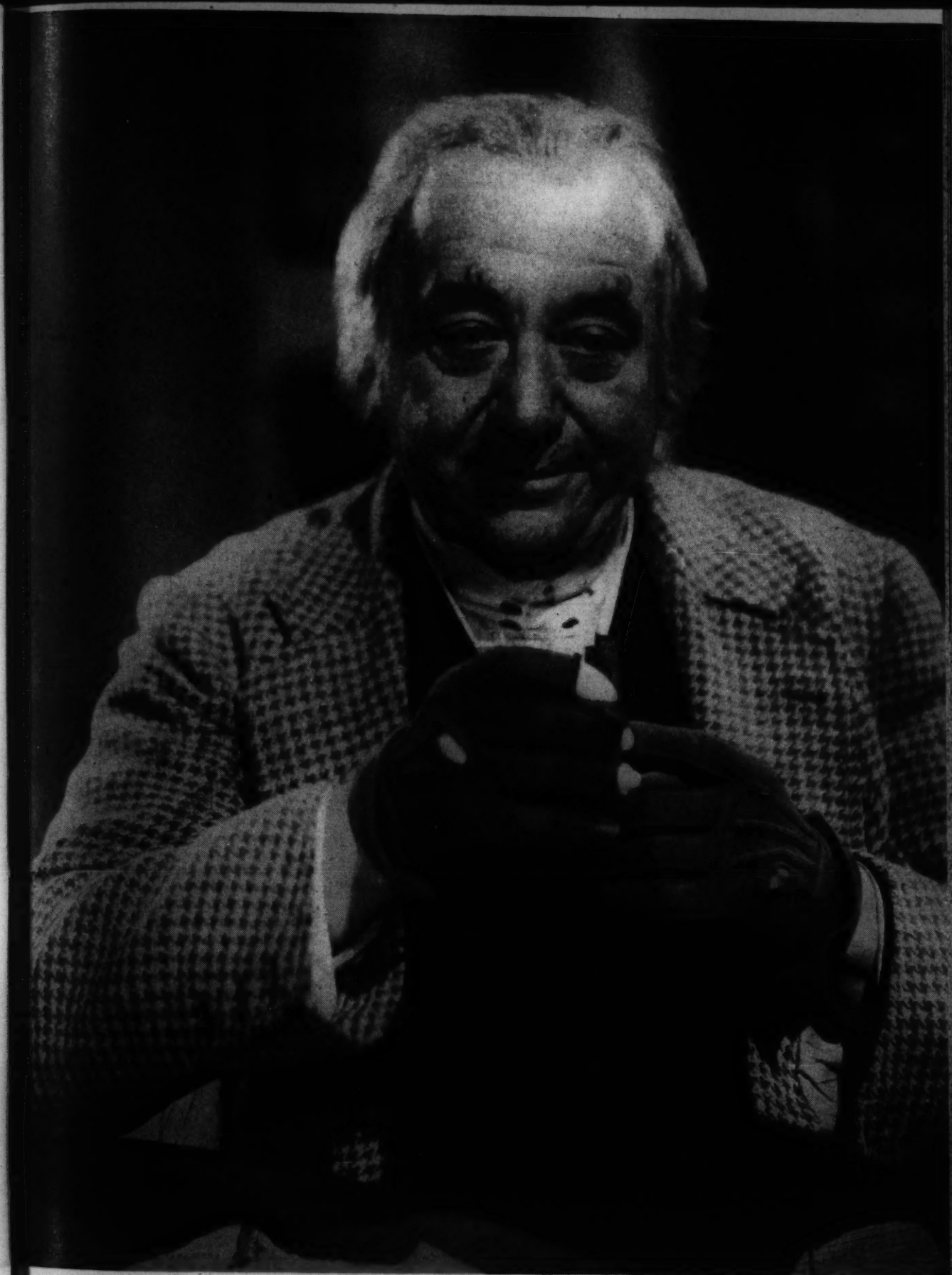
RAIMU

An appreciation by

J. B. PRIESTLEY

THERE is now another little hole in the wall, through which the east wind can whistle. Raimu is dead. I shall go on enjoying French films, I hope, but I shall never look forward to them with the same old eagerness, not without Raimu. I never understood more than about a sixth of what he said, but still he was my favourite film actor. (As he was also the favourite of some of my actor friends, themselves famous on the films.) Take equal portions of Ralph Richardson and Charles Laughton, mix and season well and allow the mixture to mature, then add a rich Southern French dressing—and you have Raimu. He was that rare and satisfying type, the big juicy Frenchman.

Even in poor films—and I saw him in one, new to me, only three months ago, in Berne—his own performance never disappointed me. He might be shoddily tricked out as a crook with a heart of gold in an unreal bit of nonsense, yet he created his own reality, gave the sagging stuff a lift, and by a tone, a look, a cunning entrance or exit, persuaded you that you were seeing something human and good. He had, as Ralph Richardson has, a ripe earthiness lit with magic, for which I would gladly exchange all the romantic profiles in the world. Like all the tragi-comedians, he conjured you into the mood when you do not know whether to laugh or to cry. He was always larger, more massive, infinitely heavier than all the players round him, and yet he offered more light and shade than they did. His crooks were his least important creations, just as the films that presented them were of no merit, and yet even his crooks had moments of sudden startling ferocity and then other moments of weariness and despair, shown in his great sagging back, that turned these routine characters, if only for a few seconds, into new Macbeths. His rich *bourgeois* figures, as in *Le Roi S'Amuse,* were wonderful studies of complacency and self-approval, touched by doubt and a kind of wondering wistfulness. There was in the best of them too, that hint of a knowing gleam, possessed by all the great comic actors, which suggested that this dupe and butt was at least the equal of his audience in intelligence, tipping us the wink that we are all dupes and butts in our turn.



RAIMU

Raimu, beloved French tragi-comedian, whose world-famous successes have been in "Un Carnet de Bal," "Marius" and "La Femme du Boulanger," seen above as he appears in "Monsieur La Souris," one of the more recent films. He died in September, mourned by filmgoers all over the world.

I never saw him in *Marius*, which we are told was his greatest triumph, and I think he will remain longest in my memory as the uxorious baker in *La Femme Du Boulanger*. Here again I would say that he gave the tale a lift that removed it from the region of rather primitive rural manners, giving it a breadth and symbolism. His baker, so proud of his craft, so bewitched and bewildered by his wife's beauty, so helpless in his fall, so inarticulate and wistful when beauty, robbed of its earlier bloom, came home (and remember how he produced the little cake shaped like a heart), was Man himself, the artist and boastful fool, the betrayed animal and the immortal maker. And if the film cast a longer shadow than the original tale, that was because Raimu brought to it his own genius.

There were many fine French films in which Raimu had no part, but much as I enjoyed the performances of Baur, Jouvet, Francen and the rest, I was always hoping that Raimu would turn up somehow, that the stout man in the restaurant or the man behind the newspaper in the café or the civic dignitary at whose office door we waited would suddenly reveal those familiar heavy features, the pendulous lower lip, the haunted eyes and lost look of the born tragi-comedian. Even if there was no mention of his name, I hoped to hear again those hoarse tones, now rumbling and dubious, now suddenly snapping into ferocity, now rising to *bonhomie*. It is true that I never understood more than one word in six of his dialogue, but he contrived to suggest such a warmth and richness of life that I felt I was listening to some of the finest speeches in the world. The very gaps in some of his films, the sequences I never quite followed, seem better in retrospect than whole admired epics from Hollywood. Though only in this land of shadows, I had met a character; and in that great glittering world of Super-productions and Colossal Stars and Unmatched Brilliance of Talent; I had the luck to run across an artist.

Because he played in films we have not entirely lost him at one stroke. We can magically command him to return out of those flat tins of film, and show us again his warmth and rich humanity and massive deliberate art. But the copies will soon dim and fray; that hoarse voice will be harder to understand; those heavy features will fade until at last we shall not be able to see him push out his lower lip again. The French are good at monuments; they should erect one to the memory of this player, who reminded us so often, in the darkening Thirties, that France had known a Rabelais, a Molière, a Balzac, that the old spirit had not flickered out entirely but could light up a cinema screen for an hour or two.

So Old Raimu has gone, lumbering off the set like a wondering bear for the last time, and the gap he has left will not be filled in a hurry, for me, by Cocteau's romantic spectres or by Existentialist performers. Come—my cloak, for there is now another little hole in the wall, through which the east wind whistles.

—(Reprinted from the *New Statesman and Nation* by kind permission of the Editor.)

A NOTE ON A GREAT ARTIST

By ROY-ALEXANDER FOWLER

His film is finally shot and completely cut. The lights in the theatre go out after his performance. We shall see him no more, save as shadow. Raimu is dead. He whom some called the greatest actor in the world is no more, and we are the poorer.

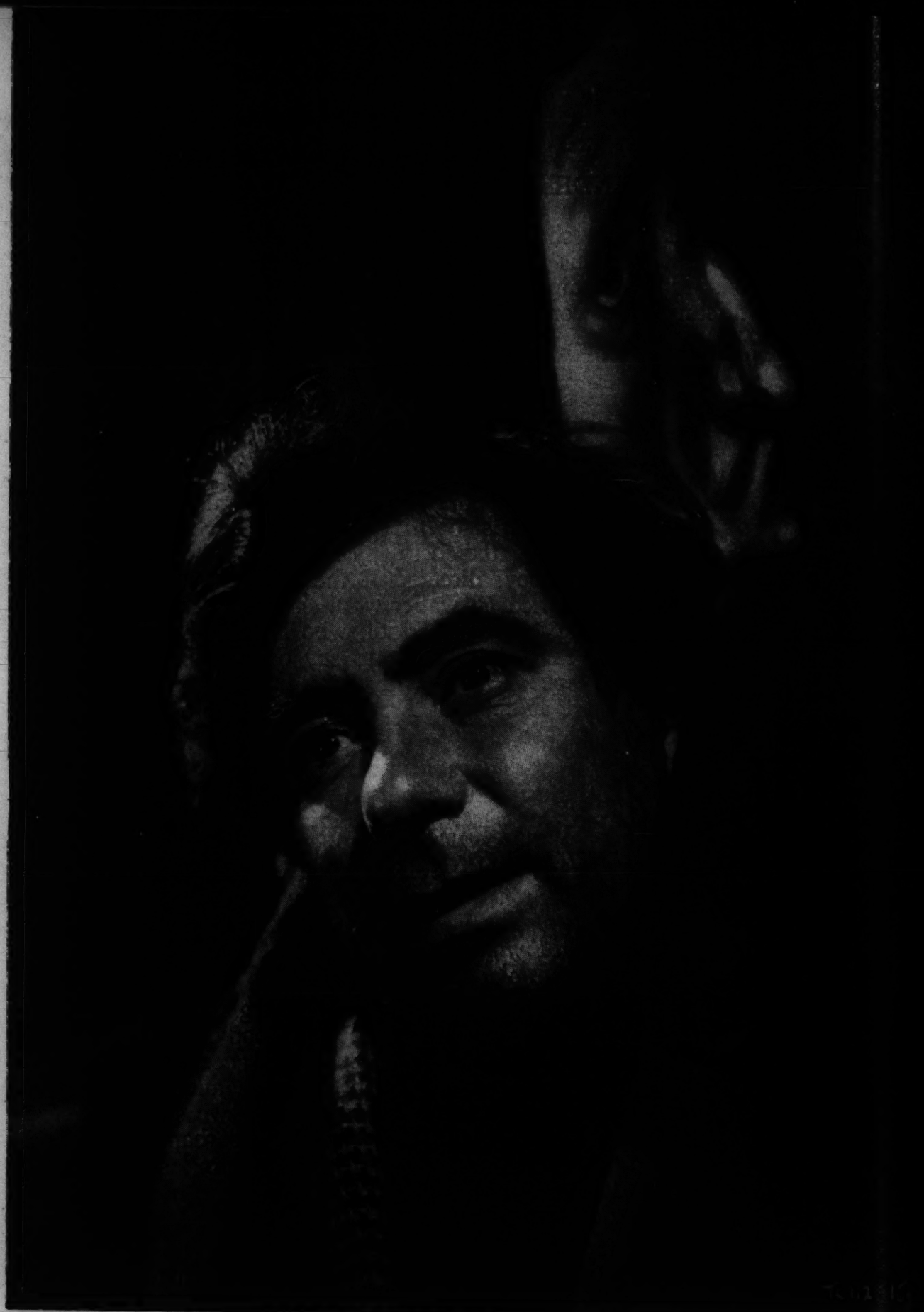
He died during an operation at Neuilly, September 20th, at five minutes to twelve in the morning. Paris papers of that evening brought shock, sadness and pitiful disbelief not only to his associates of cinema and theatre but to the great public for whom he was more than an actor. On the 23rd they gathered from his home in the rue Washington to the church of St. Philippe-du-Roule and then from the church to the cemetery of Batignolles as his body journeyed through Paris for the last time. At his grave a few associates and friends gathered to say farewell. The speeches were made by André Obey, director of the Comédie Francaise, Julien Betheau and Maurice Chevalier who, simply, spoke of him as if he were still living. Marcel Pagnol, who had, perhaps, most to do with Raimu's career, was able to say only a few words. " One cannot make a speech on the grave of a father, of a brother or of a son. You were at once all three to me: I shall not speak on your grave."

Raimu's real name was Jules Muraire, but it was under the name of Rollins that he made his début at Marseilles in 1898. He later adopted his more famous name in Paris where, engaged by Rip and Sacha Guitry, he achieved no small measure of fame. His greatest successes, however, the true story that was his came later when he met Marcel Pagnol. Together on stage and screen they created their greatest triumphs, *Marius,* whose brilliance is now a legend, *Fanny, César, La Femme du Boulanger.* Of *Marius'* famous four there now remains only one, Robert Vattier, *le Lyonnais.*

We shall miss the ambling shuffle, the quixotic glance, the sad, wondering eyes, the heavy, pendulous face and body, the doffed hat, the harsh, powerful voice with its Southern accent. There are many tiny things we shall miss, each of which added something to our admiration for him. But most of all, we shall feel he died at the height of his career and ability with, perhaps, much great work still to be done. When we see him in future, as baker, bourgeois drunkard or Cæsar we shall wonder what else he would have done for our delight and his pleasure.

Raimu made few films during the occupation; the most important was *Les Inconnus dans la Maison.* His last, made just after the liberation, was *L'Homme au Chapeau Rond,* adapted from a Dostoievsky novel.

For the future, Raimu will live not as a person but as a name. In many good and bad films is preserved the greatness of that name. We mourn the man who, save for Chaplin, was the greatest tragi-comedian alive. Hail, Cæsar; and farewell.



"ODD MAN OUT."

Photos : Two Cit

Above is Robert Newton, as he appears in the new Carol Reed film, "Odd Man Out," one of the most eagerly-awaited British productions of 1947. At the top of the opposite page is Irish actor F. J. McCormick, seen with James Mason on the set at Denham. At bottom is a scene from the film with Mason and Kathleen Ryan, new discovery from Dublin. Adapted from the novel by F. L. Green, "Odd Man Out," with its combination of Mason, Newton and Reed, promises to be one of the outstanding films of next year.

Drama at the Crossroads!

A NOTE ON VON STROHEIM

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

IT is imperative that I speak about Stroheim. I hope to show you why this is a matter of utmost urgency. But there is no time to lose. I must plunge into the heart of the argument if we are to be saved. And I hope that you will follow me—if the future of the cinema or of the theatre is of the least concern to you.

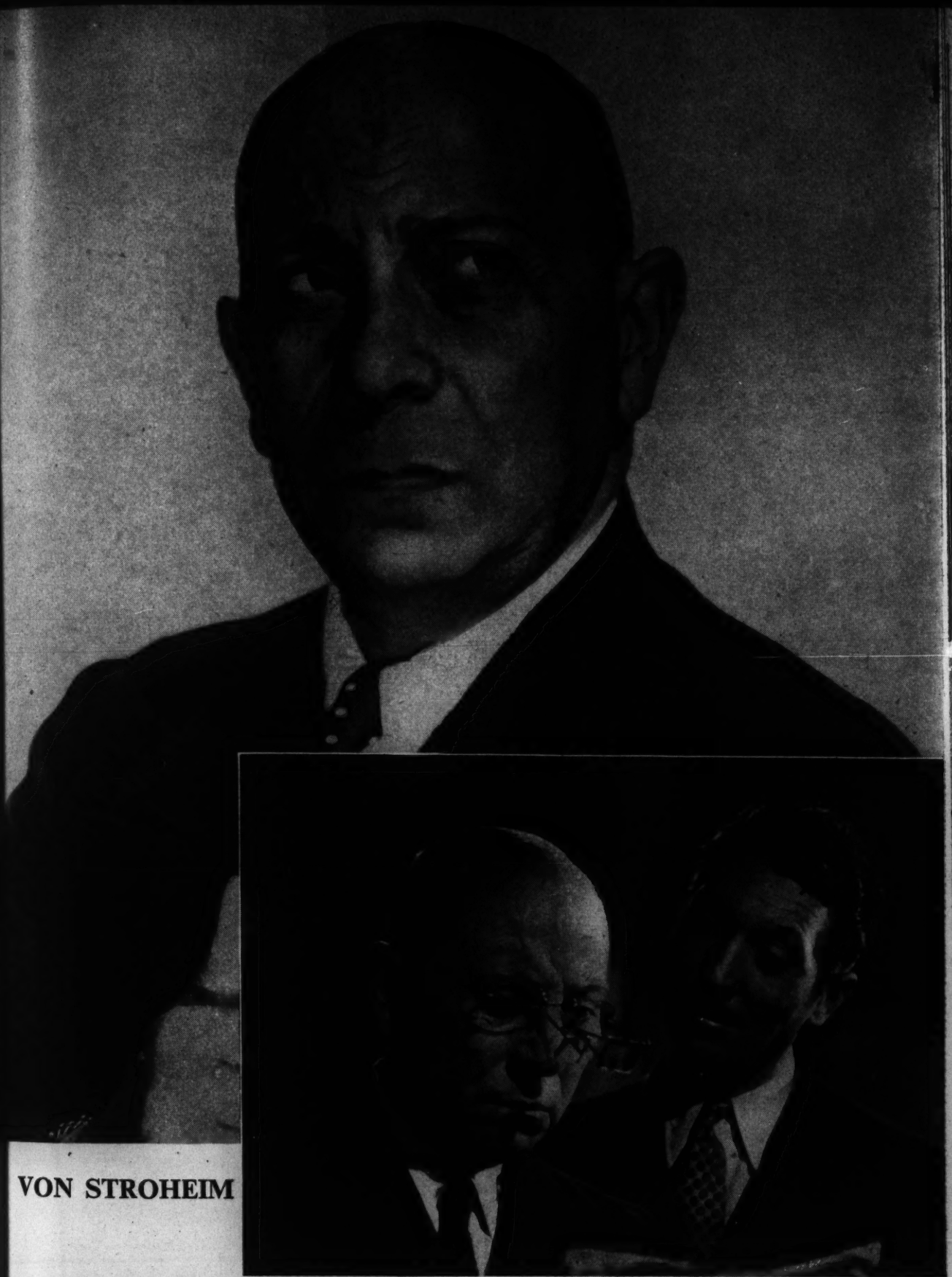
I want you to consider a particular close-up in a Stroheim film. A vast close-up of a woman photographed against a window pane. The woman is in absolute despair. Slowly, with infinite slowness, a fly is crawling across the window pane.

Now the thing I want you to notice is not so much that the movement in films need not always be fast to be dramatic—although this is worth a comment in a generation that believes the dramatic movement in films must be fast and slick to be effective; no, the thing I want you to notice is the drama of intensification and magnification. This close-up is held in its magnification to the ultimate intensity, till each ponderous step made by the fly becomes a symbol of Fate.

It is surely no great jump to move on from this close-up to the general statement that drama, in film or theatre, is a question of intensification and magnification.

If only Stroheim were directing to-day, there would be no need to make this obvious point. We would still have Stroheim films to instruct us. Alas, alack, that we have had no Stroheim-directed talkies. May the names be struck for ever from credit titles of the wretches who canned *Walking Down Broadway*. May the banks seal in their vaults the executives who failed to carry through Stroheim's great project for a talkie of the history of Vienna. (The only shot of the Emperor Joseph—in the dentist's chair.)

For not all of us were privileged to see the great Stroheim silents. But those of us who can remember—remember the impact of DRAMA. Among the signs and wonders was the fantasy of women in powdered wigs who lit cigars in the candle flame, and the terrifying saga of brass bedposts. There was Stroheim the the creator of a glittering Europe in which breeched cavalry officers put scent behind their ears and wore gold bracelets, in which old gentlemen fondled young countesses in nightdresses of light chain armour while string orchestras of naked musicians played for the banquet of the bedroom; and there was Stroheim the realist, Stroheim of the dead cat in the dust-bin. But the relevant point is that in the palace or in the gutter, Stroheim had full control of intensification and magnification.



VON STROHEIM

Erich von Stroheim, stormy petrel of Hollywood, director of "Greed," "Foolish Wives," and other masterpieces of the silent screen, has recently been acting in French films. His last American appearances were in "Storm Over Lisbon," "The Lady and the Doctor," "The Great Flamarion" and "The Mask of Dijon." Now in Paris, he has recently completed "On Ne Meurt Pas Comme Ca," and "La Foire Aux Chimeres" in which he is seen above with Jean-Jacques Delbo.

So much did this sense of drama obsess him, that he himself became such a drama. What a creature it was—to intensify and magnify himself till Hollywood, boasting of the fortune spent on productions, nearly went bankrupt. One finds this personal drama still in the Stroheim of to-day, Stroheim the actor, the " garlanded bull," the man who can teach us how to enjoy a cigarette, that " eleventh finger of bliss," while wearing tight gloves. How his personality leaps at us. Such audience-projection is the secret of great theatre—the secret of intensification and magnification.

But it is essential, if we are to get from Stroheim the full value of his contribution to cinema, to keep the rumours and jealousies in their proper place. For we are in such a plight that his legend can still help us, if we will take the trouble to study it. It's the little critics of film history who have yapped. A genius, they say, is a man who can " do a job of work," and this Stroheim was just a muddler when he took a year to make a film. The Master (they say) should have written an exact " shooting script," and then produced it in a pre-determined number of days. It does not occur to them when Stroheim spent a week moving among the extras for a crowd scene, correcting details of dress and deportment, that he was busy with the *psychic* business of intensification. He was, in fact, imprinting on each actor his own personality. The final shot was Stroheim. Compare a Stroheim crowd scene to one contrived by a job-of-work producer which is marshalled by whistle blast and time schedule. But then the ideal of the little critic is a documentary about the waste products of coal. One should not expect him to understand that Stroheim made the cinema art. And, to be fair, it is possible to make a case that Stroheim often chose subjects which were too costly. For the whole-hearted artist, economics had become, too, part of the drama of magnification.

A star publicity agent of Hollywood tells, in his memoirs, how Stroheim called to see him. This agent had been entrusted with the publicity of one of Stroheim's pictures. Stroheim said, " If you don't do exactly as I tell you, I'll bite your throat open." And that, gentlemen, is the Stroheim spirit. That is what we need if we are to win our battle against the conspiracy which is trying to rob the screen and stage of drama.

This conspiracy, which calls itself the modern school, controls pretty nearly everything from critical platforms to contract clauses. And it will not permit drama to be spelt with a capital. At first it was a simple racket. It's easier not to try. It's simpler to get away with nothing, if you can get away with it. And so the public was trained to accept the modern school, because the general public will accept anything if they are told it is more " genteel " to do so. You can sell a hat that actually looks like a hot cake or a brand new brand of lavatory paper if you say the damned thing gives " tone."

So the modern school encouraged actors to keep sedately behind the foot-lights. Audience-projection isn't " true to life." It's a rare and skilled affair. It's easier to let the actor be " just like "

a real gentleman or a real worker, according to the size of the theatre. On stage and screen, the modern school has gradually made audience-projection taboo: an artiste of stature shows up the whole racket. And the modern school has encouraged plays in which the first act is very like the second act which is indistinguishable from the third, with the excuse that life is very much of a jog-trot, anyway. In films the policy has been to substitute ordinary people for actors—a trend fortuitously blessed by Pudovkin and Eisenstein, to make sets which look just like "the real thing," to introduce more and more documentary material.

Personally, I find the modern school a disaster. I find it hard to look at the plan of a theatre—one of those plans which are displayed outside the box-office—without nowadays thinking of a cemetery. (Look again, sir, and see how the seats stand up like gravestones.) For I see no point in going to the theatre if I am to get no "plus" above the reading of the play which I can manage quite nicely at home, if I want to read it. My theatre must be theatre—an art of intensification and magnification. And I don't want my cinema to be an edited edition of the things I can see for myself during the day. I know there is, in a metaphysical sense, a universal drama to be found in everything, even the most boring routine. But I don't go to the theatre or the cinema to learn this lesson. There are better ways of learning philosophy; and library books are to be had for the fraction of the cost of a theatre or cinema seat. The theatre or cinema, if it is to have its place in my life as well as literature and painting, must be something that can be called *an outing*! It must be—an intensification, a magnification. It must be an occasion, a thrill.

Consider *The Spectre of The Rose*, a recent attempt to break away from the rut. The critics immediately raised their old war cry that the dialogue of the young lovers was not "true to life." They meant—that the dialogue was not true to the life of the "genteel" social existence of the better-class factory worker. For anyone who has mixed at all with young theatre people, who have artistic aspirations, will know that the dialogue of Ben Hecht's film is true to their life. The exaggerations and absurdities are exactly the sort of nonsense such people indulge in when they are in love. They are jokes, and, as it were, a series of tests. They say something to see if they will laugh at it. "If we don't laugh at this, it must be because we are in love—so let's try it out." Whether you can bear this sort of thing or not—and what's your private love talk like?—it's authentic in the Hecht film.

You see? The last old excuse that life itself is so rich—the tag which used to make drama lovers say "Why not be content with life, then?"—is no longer valid. We are not even to be permitted life entire. We must be given a life that conforms.

Arise, then, drama lovers! The time has come for a great revolution. Let our banner fly the slogan: BACK TO STROHEIM. Let us boycott the chill theatres until they give us again films and plays on the Stroheim scale. For Stroheim spelt drama with five capitals!

the indian cinema

by Philip Beck

IT seems strange that with the recent increased demand for information on film, engendered by its belated recognition as one of the arts, very little has been written about the work of the Indian studios.

The cinema industry in India has been functioning for many years on a scale which astonishes the Westerner, on first acquaintance with the country. He is amazed at the prolificity of production and the vastness of the patronage.

Why, he wonders, hadn't he heard about it before? How could such a huge production centre escape notice in the present widespread survey of the film industry?

The reason is two-fold. The Indian film is at present too national to appeal to the average patron of a foreign cinema, and too crude (on the whole) to merit the serious attention of the student. But for the student who is anxious to obtain comprehensive insight on his subject it should not be entirely overlooked. Shackled though it is by the strict dictates of box-office, and handicapped by technical deficiences, it still manages occasionally to produce footage of film artistry which, coupled with the beauty of its dancing and costumes, should appeal to the æsthete.

It is a pity that one of those obliging little London cinemas does not present an occasional small cherry in its cultural cocktail of foreign films in the form of one of the more successful efforts from the Indian studios. Even the best of recent productions would not compare favourably with a good French film. Direction, camera work and cutting usually emulate Western examples without marked success, and seldom show evidence of genius, while sound is generally of a low standard and colour primitive. But it would undoubtedly intrigue the type of person who habitually patronises these cinemas—the escapist from the celluloid bonds of Hollywood clichés. In fact, for sheer novelty alone, it would be worth a visit.

It must be borne in mind that the Indian film director's scope for artistic expression is very rigidly controlled by popular demand and finance, far more so than in the West. He must display his talents (if any) within the limits of the accepted entertainment formula and the lining of his studio's purse, which is usually of comparatively meagre proportions. A recent estimate of expenditure on the average Indian film was only £7,500. There is no "Cæsar-and-Cleopatra" elasticity to time and expense.

From the artistic point of view, a revolutionary effort of the "Citizen Kane" *genre* would be so much blank film to the studio

concerned. The uneducated, demonstrative crowds who pack the 2,000-odd cinemas in all parts of the immense country throughout the year, chewing betelnut, spitting noisily and splitting peanuts are completely unconcerned with film as an art. Like the vast majority of Western cinema patrons, they clamour for entertainment and to hell with montage. They want romance, comedy, song and dance sequence. To the uninitiated, Indian chants of the rich man's son in love with a dancing girl is dished up with slight variations ad infinitum. As with their personal diet, they ask for no change.

Plots must be simple. The Indian likes his emotions uncloaked by subtlety. His heroes must be truly heroic (although they are ocasionally permitted to resort to alcohol when heroines are fickle), and his villains must engender unquestionable hatred (although they are somethimes allowed to reform). He likes violence, with liberal blood-letting, and he respects religion, preferably with music.

Yet in this tightly-bound nosegay for exclusive presentation to the Indian man-in-the-hot-street, the student may find a flower or two of interest; a perfect close-up with well-arranged lighting, a well-balanced angle shot, or a neat bit of cutting. And, as an æsthete, he will be intrigued by the dancing, however badly photographed. It has a fascination, a strange beauty which has earned renown throughout the world; the poetry of expressive hands and nimble, belled feet.

Exterior scenes, intelligently directed and sensitively photographed, have elevated many an Indian film from the rut of stereotype into which the majority, studio-bound, fall. A song sequence transported to the open air by one company recently revived a film which was dying of claustrophobia. The refrain was started by workers in the fields, with close-ups of interesting faces; picked up by people on slow, rolling bullock carts, photographed from a low viewpoint through sunlit dust; played with by children on a fence; swung by girls on the branch of a tree; and carried away to the heavens by a flight of pigeons. It was as if a cool breeze from Kashmir had stolen into the thick atmosphere of the cinema concerned. It was film artistry. And the man-in-the-hot-street got his song as ordered.

Generally, the Indian film excels in its presentation of legendary stories, with their scope for costume, frank emotion, temple and palace sets. It is awkward and ludicrous in Western dress. It is as comfortable and natural in legend as the Indian who wears his shirt outside his trousers. It becomes strained and stupid when he tucks it in and sports a tie and a felt hat.

Hollywood influence is all too apparent. Western-style modern dramas are packed with characters copied from the stock book of the film city. But a dusky detective, complete with slouched hat, cigar, assumed toughness and flashed badge, fails to impress, though he may frequently be addressed with great reverence as "Inspector Sahib." Even the Indians laugh at some pseudo-Hollywood sequences. A jilted hero, in one drama, joined the Army to forget,

became involved in a series of library shots showing Yanks dashing into the fray, was felled by a thunderflash and wound up in hospital with a picturesque bandage.

But a few directors have studied Western technique to advantage. A bizarre scene in one film was enhanced by the Duvivier-Welles trick of tilting the camera. A crowd scene greatly benefited by the Renoir technique of the elongated shot with a mobile camera, with pauses for character cameos. There is, however, a noticeable tendency to introduce originality in the treatment of recent productions, and if this is fostered certain Indian directors may yet gain admission to the ranks of the acknowledged masters of film-making.

The Indian film industry is older than is generally known. The first film, *Harischandra,* was produced in 1913. At present, there are between 150 and 200 companies engaged in production. About two-thirds of the annual output is from Bombay, but there are other important studios at Calcutta, Poona, Madras, Lahore and Kolhapur. About £7,000,000 is invested in the industry, which gives employment to some 15,000 people. Studios are often little more than large sheds in side streets.

Generally, the Indian film is longer than its Western counterpart. Prior to 1942, when owing to wartime shortage of raw film the length was limited to 11,000 feet, the average film ran to 13,000 feet, while some reached 19,000.

Long runs are common. The showing of a popular film, like the Indian version of *Kismet,* at the same cinema for over a year is by no means unusual.

Publicity ranges from vivid, crude sandwich boards carried by withered, indifferent men through small communities with an accompaniment of tom-toms, to American-inspired blurb in splash ads. ("Nature nurtured their love and The Clouds swayed with sympathy!" was the bait for one film.)

Dialogue is principally in Hindustani, but Tamil, Bengali, Telugu and Marathi are also employed.

There is obvious talent among the acting personnel, and one comes to rely upon such names as Begum Para, Surendra, Leela Chitnis, Noorjehan, Yakub and Manorma for good performances. And among the dancers are several possessed of such character, grace and ability that it is amazing they have not been transported from their homeland in the cage of a fat contract to be featured in rude, coloured Hollywood musicals.

Kissing is tabu, and the female form is always modestly covered. Indians who want to see legs and lush embraces patronise cinemas showing American films, and greet such displays with whoops of excitement and derision.

There is a place for the Indian film in the realm of the select cinema if it leaves Hollywood alone and concentrates on building up its character in accord with the historic traditions of its native land.

THE ACHING VOID

A Petition and Testimony to EMLYN WILLIAMS

by

JUSTINE ST. JOHN

"LADIES and Gentlemen, I give you Emlyn Williams. Cherish him, for he is of value to the theatre." So spake Godfrey Tearle on the first night of *The Light of Heart*. I would re-echo those words on behalf of Mr. Williams's no less urgent value to the cinema. During the war our master actor-dramatist has served the theatre faithfully, but the British screen is wilting where Williams once stood.

We have seen Noel Coward make three superlative British films: *In Which We Serve, This Happy Breed* and *Brief Encounter;* and glory be, himself acting most beautifully in the first of these. Laurence Olivier meanwhile presented us with a miracle of artistic achievement called *Henry V*. As producer, director and Henry, Olivier gave us more of himself than, obviously, we had ever seen whilst he was subject to the supervision of others. And we succumbed in our millions to the spell of that unity in its glorious conception of Shakespeare.

I hoped that these triumphs might encourage E.W. to produce, direct or at any rate act in screen adaptations of his own work, or act in a Coward film—or at any rate act something on celluloid. But the last time my heart was affected by such an event was as long ago as *Hatter's Castle,* when he first burst into the picture, through the door of a pub., those unprecedented eyes of his roving rapaciously round the room, his lips leering welcome to beer and barmaid. Perhaps the most amazing thing about Emlyn Williams is that his features can evince electric, almost blinding sex appeal, yet when he orders, their power of spiritual expression is no less prepotent. So the visage alone is invaluable to the piercing camera, not to mention the voice that has thrilled audiences for fifteen years.

One might suppose that the way he places his precious plays into the clumsy hands of Hollywood would indicate an antipathy

to the screen. Certainly *Night Must Fall* suffered enbluntment of wit and defacement of incident, and *The Light of Heart* became merely mechanical. On this evidence we were concerned whether the film of *The Corn Is Green* would be Emlyn's own green corn or just corny. It was, after all, quite a telling translation, but could undoubtedly have been better done by Noel Coward or Carol Reed; whilst none but Emlyn himself could breathe the full complement of genius into the rôle of Morgan Evans.

When he was a little boy he adored " the pictures " and devoured them omnivorously. And he once said " the film and the play both mean the theatre and the theatre is Life ' in all its immensity '—whatever that may mean."

He didn't imply, of course, any confusion of the two different media but, I think, that " the pictures " represent " the theatre " to all those to whom histrionics have only ever come in tin cans.

In his early screen days, Emlyn did then spare his talents both to acting and scenario-writing. What delicious film shorts could and should now be made of excerpts from his earlier successes, so vastly more entertaining than the pot-boiler second feature and dull documentary, and serving to re-introduce an Emlyn Williams the youngest generation of filmgoers never knew.

As the mad Lord Lebanon, for instance, in *The Case of the Frightened Lady,* for which he won an award for the best acting of 1932. To me he seemed to uproot the very foundations of hackneyed technique; his Welsh-cum-Oxford accented voice gushed forth with the insistence of a waterfall.

Then came the first of those scrumptious straying cad performances—the benign, pushing fellow in *Friday the 13th* who " befriended " Frank Lawton only to blackmail him. He was quite the most exciting young man I'd ever seen or in imagination conceived. I say exactly the same of him to-day when twelve years have elapsed. But then I caught the first spontaneous blast of that magic.

The appearance was intriguing: eyes of a beauty and observation that rather defied description; the profile of a human being, not a matinée idol; a smile of crafty radiance, soft, succulent words delivered on a toothy semi-sneer; a stocky physique with a magnetic poise—or swagger (as part demanded). All this and a voice that caressed the ears with all the sweet mysticism of Wales and the nicest, newest culture of England. For the first time I knew the meaning of the word inseparable from E.W., " magic," histrionic and personal.

His name was not as yet a household word, but the children at my school were soon familiar with it, and when requested to write an essay on " Knowledge " I realised the opportunity of enlightening my teachers also. I outlined the childhood in Wales, the writing of plays long before he saw one, the winning of the scholarship for Oxford—the story that was later to become crystallised in *The Corn Is Green,* the most inspired and beautiful of all modern plays. It must have been due to the sanctity of my subject that my English

teacher did not rebuke me for my notorious preoccupation with the cinema but allowed me to hold forth during English class on the neglect of Emlyn in British films, for his parts were then of irksome brevity.

Yet his first appearance in any film always aroused a flutter of excited expectation throughout the auditorium ("here he is!" and "Oh! Emlyn Williams," etc.). I hope British film producers have not lost sight of this. If they are not troubling to submit their plum rôles to him, they have only themselves to blame if one day he eventually does succumb to the coveteous embrace of Hollywood.

In the mid 'thirties we heard that Emlyn might be invited to play opposite Garbo. I feel terribly sorry for Garbo that she lost this opportunity, but you can't have everything. Mr. Williams is a fervent Garbo fan but he probably replied "Sorry, I'm writing a play" when Hollywood officially beckoned.

He did, however, give us another magnificent cad performance in *The Stars Look Down,* and a silver top-hatted study in jocular ferocity in *Jamaica Inn,* both bristling with wit.

Yet what promised to be his most riotously satanic acting was lost when Korda's *I, Claudius* was abandoned upon the Messalina, Merle Oberon, sustaining injuries in an automobile accident. Must the enormously costly scenes completed for this film by a uniformly famous cast remain in oblivion when art, prestige (and profit) could proceed even from the unfinished form. The studio workers predicted that even against the competition of Laughton's great work our hero's handsome, whip-cracking, lecherous Caligula would emerge the more triumphant.

Imaginative cutting and authoritative narrative could soon turn into account excerpts from the high-lights of this and any other artiste's career.

In the meantime, should a great artist restrict himself to the West End and a few major provincial theatres when he is already relished in the cinema and the English-speaking world awaits to be enchanted?

Emlyn Williams, please act for us!

Early in the New Year "STAGE & SCREEN QUARTERLY"
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"I'm a Lurid Character!"

A NOTE ON ORSON WELLES

By CYRUS ANDREWS

ANY day now a young American with the face of a disillusioned choir-boy and the body of a heavy-weight boxer slightly gone to seed will land on these shores. This man will be Orson Welles, leading film director, leading film producer, leading scriptwriter and leading man in his own films. In a nutshell, he leads.

The news alone that this thirty-one-year-old is coming over here to work with Sir Alexander Korda has set the film business by the ears. It may well be that his subsequent arrival will do rather more than this, even to attacking the British film world in the seat of its metaphorical pants. A British film director to whom I mentioned this visit nearly swallowed his tankard and spilled his beverage in indigation; since this I have avoided discussing Welles with film people who regard him as something between an atom bomb and a V.2 approaching our placid shores.

They know Welles as the fabulous genius of modern American entertainment who has made his mark—and left it—on every facet of the stage, radio and films from New York to California. How is he going to shake up the film business over here? There are many stories, but these are the facts: Welles is going to do a group of films directed at Hollywood, London and the Continent. Yes. We are going to invade Europe with Orson Welles.

The first piece will be *Around the World* which is not, as reported, Jules Verne's story, known to every schoolboy, but a New York musical, with music by Cole Porter. It will probably be made at Sound City, and will be followed by *Salome,* with Welles directing and appearing as Herod.

Other subjects are on the secret list, but you can count on seeing Welles' version of *War and Peace* which Korda has always had an ambition to produce. He has, it seems, found his man in Orson Welles, and the result will be big news, however he handles it. Anything Wellsian used to mean the future world as forecast by our own H. G. Wells: "Wellesian" now means revolution, war, strife, an innovation in public entertainment as an art and a business.

Orson Welles first hit this country in the H.G. style when he scared two million Americans out of their wits with his broadcast of "The War of the World" on the C.B.S. network. Ignoring

ORSON WELLES.

Photo: R.K.O. Radio.

Orson Welles, thirty-one-year-old genius, whose films "Citizen Kane" and "The Magnificent Ambersons" are landmarks of the modern cinema. Recently he directed and appeared in "The Stranger" for R.K.O. International; soon he is coming to England to direct and act in films for Sir Alexander Korda. The first will probably be "Salome."

all previous warnings that the programme was wholly imaginary, sober citizens were panicked into believing that this planet was being invaded by Martians! And not only the planet but a small town in New Jersey in particular had actually received the Martians with their death rays, intersteller planes and what-have-you. So said the broadcast—and many listeners took it seriously.

On the top of that came "Government spokesmen" urging the populace not to panic because they were taking care of everything. Taking no chances, the people of New Jersey took to the hills; others took down their shotguns and seized their rifles preparing to die to the last man.

Some women were stopped from poisoning themselves to save them from the fate reputed to be considerably worse than death; and doctors in hospitals had to prevent patients from mortally injuring themselves.

No catchpenny charlatan, however, is Welles, who has spent the money he's made (as well as other people's money) in furthering radio, stage and film entertainment. He is a conscious artist, he has been since the age of two when he spoke perfect English "like a cultured adult" as his guardian has put on record. From childhood he was educated by association with grown-up people—poets, painters, musicians, cartoonists and men of the world—who all treated him as an adult.

He travelled as a child on the Continent, and at the age of nine blacked his face, eloped with a little girl, and practised his skill in magic at a street corner until retrieved by his family. He is still thrilled by magic, has sawn in half several prominent people including Marlene Dietrich, and his equally pulchritudinous wife Rita Hayworth.

At sixteen Orson arrived in Ireland, went to Dublin's famed Gate Theatre, introduced himself as a star of the New York Theatre Guild and got himself small parts. Naively he argues that if the Theatre Guild had known of his talents they would have employed him anyway so there was no harm in mentioning the Guild to the Gate! He was at this theatre long enough to appear as a guest star, the first American to do so, but there was no red carpet down for him when he returned to New York. However, the disillusioned boy actor went on tour with Katherine Cornell in Shakespeare, Shaw and the "Barretts of Wimpole Street" and then with the same company finally arrived on Broadway.

There he made his radio debut in March of Time, and at one period he was in so many radio shows from morning till midnight that he had to live in an ambulance to get him around in time. This cost him £3 an hour. It was good publicity, too. Welles made New York sit up with his production of such plays as a Negro version of "Macbeth," though his translation of the scene from the cold Scottish mists to the hot south of Haiti was not his happiest adventure.

But the money poured in from radio—it was said that he earned more than £450 a week—and friendly backing gave him his chance

with John Houseman to form his own unit, famous now as the Mercury Theatre.

The two young men had enthusiasm but no money to burn and when their version of *Julius Cæsar* was played without scenery in modern dress against the bare back wall of a dingy theatre the critics lost their heads in praise. Other successes followed at the Mercury, and the theatre became airborne as a radio sensation in which Welles translated old and new works into the form of the personal narrative told in the first person singular.

The public as well as the critics fell heavily for the technique and Welles' melodious voice, even though it had led to the biggest scare the United States has ever had—barring Pearl Harbour. Not content with radio and stage triumphs, America's boy wonder turned to films, signed up with the R.K.O. Radio Pictures to make one picture a year in which he could choose to be producer, director, actor, or writer, taking twenty-five per cent. of the gross profits of each film and dipping into the till with an advance of 150,000 dollars.

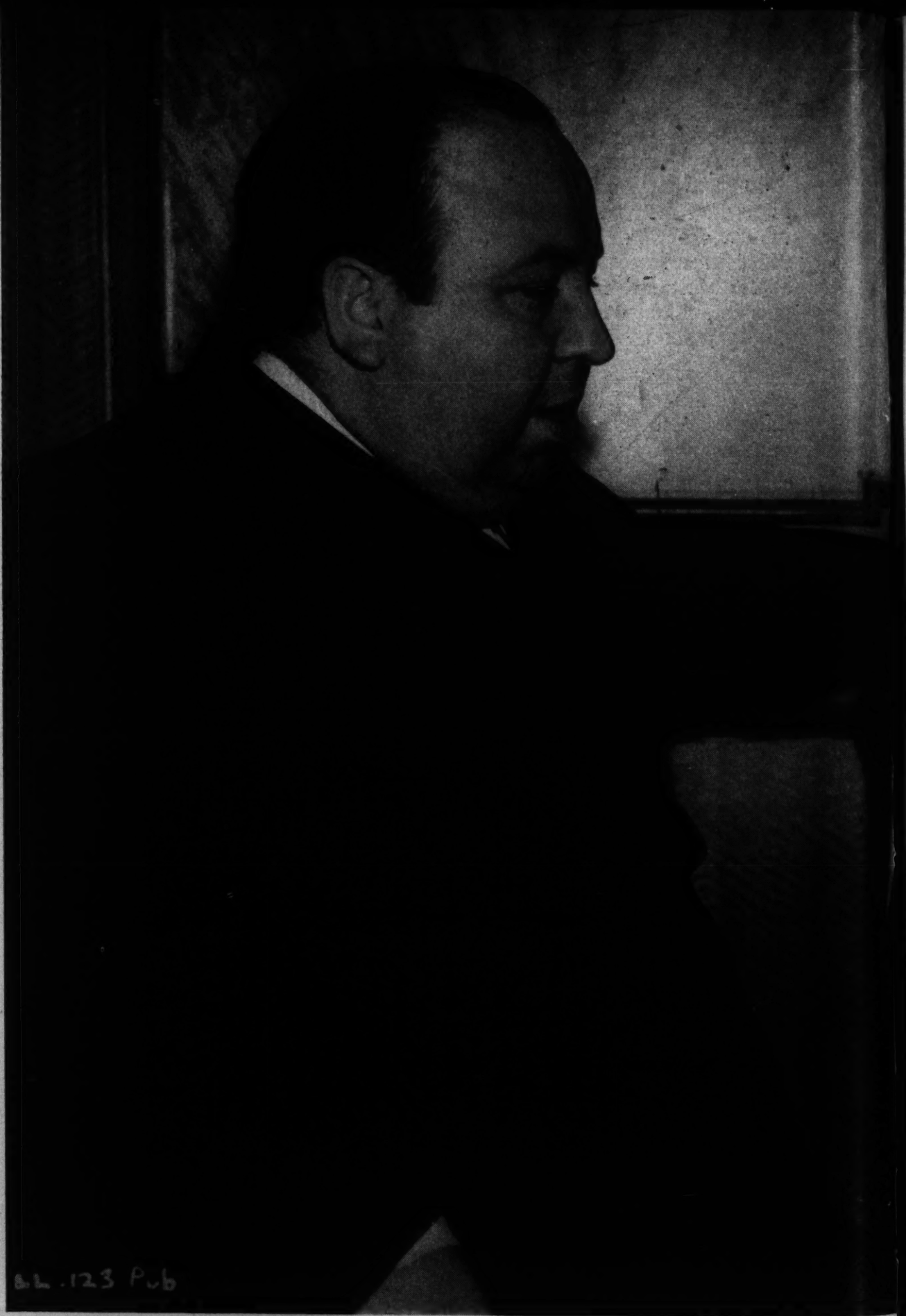
Hollywood gave him the brush-off, and ridiculed his past—they presented him with a bearded ham in regard to the beard which he grew for the initial film he had in mind—and laughed and jeered at him. They called him "Little Orson Annie," but Welles didn't mind. He just went on learning what a film studio could do for a year, and then finally got to work on *Citizen Kane* which again set the storm beating about Welles' head.

Newspaper baron, William Randolph Hearst, got wind of it and let his vast newspaper empire imply that it reflected on him (and he wasn't so far wrong, either!). The film industry were not going out of their way to offend the large newspaper interests and all the pressure was put on to shut up Welles' film. But to no avail. The threats between all concerned flew thick and fast, but Welles said that the film must go on, even if he had to find the money himself to buy the film from R.K.O.—as he had a right to do under his contract.

The film did go on, and in America, as here, *Citizen Kane* was, relatively, a box-office failure, despite the laudatory remarks of the critics. It was an immense artistic success and established the young man as a considerable film personality.

Welles followed up with *The Magnificent Ambersons*, which introduced many new angles and some new technique, and he is still doing so. At thirty-one, Welles is the same precocious young man, still in the experimentalist stage, and no one with sense can say where he is going. What he will do over here in British studios is anybody's guess.

At any rate he will abjure pomposity. When asked to try and add dignity to his public character he once replied: "Nobody who has the abject vanity to smear his face with grease paint and recite in public should ever think about dignity. I have no more dignity than a nude at noon on Fifth Avenue. Get this straight—I am a lurid character!"



ALFRED HITCHCOCK.

Above: Ingrid Bergman, Steven Geray and John Emery in "Spellbound," 1946.
Below: Michael Redgrave, Margaret Lockwood and "Hitch" on the set of "The Lady Vanishes," 1938.

Hitchcock in Hollywood

An Interim Report: 1939-46

By H. D. WILSON

ALFRED HITCHCOCK is a legend. So that when, in 1939, he went to Hollywood, the consequences were bound to be interesting. His departure was inauspicious. His last British film, a scrappy, unsatisfactory melodrama, *Jamaica Inn*, had nowhere in it any suggestion of the brilliant, melodramatic genius of *The 39 Steps* or *The Lady Vanishes*. Moreover, it had the additional handicap of the presence in the leading role of Mr. Charles Laughton, also a man of determined ideas and brusque methods, which may, in some measure, account for the exaggerated, bravura quality of his performance, and the curious, piecemeal effect of the rest.

Hitchcock's first American film, *Rebecca*, succeeded, despite its novelettish story, mainly by its powerful evocation of atmosphere. The English director painstakingly built up an overwhelming atmosphere tension simply by his brilliant camera sense. The haunting, dream-like atmosphere of the house Manderley owed itself to this camera suggestion, from the opening sequence of the girl recalling the experience of a dream (and what a fashion that started), to the restless, probing, interior shots in the house itself, with its rooms, corridors, galleries, and massive fireplaces. And the film's most compelling illusion—the suggestion of the all-pervading spirit of a dead woman—was achieved partly by the highlighting of significant detail (the sharp, evocative camera image), and partly by the ingenious use of a musical theme or motif which, reiterated constantly whenever the dead woman is mentioned, finally achieved the quality of hallucination.

If, by comparison, *Rebecca* has been overpraised, his next film, *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, has been insufficiently appreciated, and overlooked altogether by the collectors, yet it represents his best comedy work to date. Originally intending to portray the family life of the average American couple, the idea went astray, either in the script or on the floor, and instead of the saga of domesticity Hitchcock was later to develop in *Shadow of a Doubt*, we were treated to the spectacle, entertaining enough in itself, of the principals, Carole Lombard and Robert Montgomery, arguing and making love in their pyjamas in the early morning, in an apartment so stupefying in its vulgarity that one wondered what had happened to the Hitchcock who once poured scorn on the whole tradition of British art

direction, and insisted on the virtues of the ordinary suburban scene as the background for his films.

There were, however, some compensating touches, such as the satirical flavour of the scene where the young couple, on their wedding anniversary, return to the scene of their first romantic meetings, and find the place (a restaurant) incredibly changed and cheapened. In embarrassed silence they eat an inferior dinner, under the hostile eye of the new proprietor, suspicious and resentful, and quite unaware of the sentimental nature of the occasion, surrounded by the insolent stares of pavement urchins and local riff-raff who have all collected outside to gaze at the phenomenon.

Foreign Correspondent marked a return to the familiar theme of espionage and violence, which is second nature to Hitchcock, and to which he finds it necessary to return occasionally, if only to reassure himself that the old hand has lost none of its cunning. It had, in fact, acquired quite a few new tricks. The refinements of time and a more sophisticated background made *Foreign Correspondent* a thriller of classic proportions. The sharp, visual thrills were there in plenty, if anything more calculated and cold-blooded than ever: the hero almost mangled in revolving machinery; a man falling to his death from Westminster Cathedral; death by drowning as the rising waters overwhelm the occupants of the doomed aircraft; and a bizarre scene of torture in a tenement bedroom off the Tottenham Court Road, done to the accompaniment of dreary jazz, played relentlessly over and over again on the same scratched record. There was, too, the notable sequence of the assassination of the statesman (or rather, borrowing from Fritz Lang, his double) in the rain in Amsterdam: the violent agitation of the umbrellas as the assassin dashes through the crowd of bystanders who have just seen the killing. And the killing itself, done with all the studied care and craftsman's pride: the sudden, menacing close-up of the gun concealed in a camera; the look of horror on the victim's face as he reels backward, blood welling from the mouth. Murder, which is usually so clean and comfortable in the cinema, suddenly acquired some of its authentic horror.

In *Suspicion* we were back in the faintly county atmosphere of *Rebecca*, with the same provincial setting (a shade lower, socially, than *Rebecca*), vaguely repressed spinster-heroine (Miss Fontaine repeating her exquisite performance as the unworldly child-wife of *Rebecca*), with a plausible ne'er-do-well husband with a dubious past, who may or may not be going to kill her. Probably Hitchcock, as he originally conceived the idea, intended that he should; his producer disagreed; and as the producer is always right, he didn't. Instead, Hitchcock had to be content with mystifying the audience until almost the last moment, when, somewhat lamely, one felt, the equivocal looks, obscure motives, and flashy tricks with luminous glasses of milk (the idea crops up again in *Spellbound*) were all innocently explained away as being the mere figments of the heroine's overwrought imagination.

Just as, in England, he unaccountably made films like *Young and Innocent* and *Jamaica Inn* in the intervals of his successes, so

Saboteur remains, unquestionably, his feeblest American film to date: a pot-boiler, maybe, but with the jet turned only half on. *Saboteur* was practically an anthology of tricks taken from his earlier, more spontaneous British thrillers: the chase in which, for a time, the hero and heroine are handcuffed together (in 1936 it was Madeleine Carroll and Robert Donat; in 1941 it was Robert Cummings and Priscilla Lane, so that the trick didn't quite come off a second time); the interview, face to face, with the chief criminal, in which motives are discussed with disarming charm and candour (also *The* 39 *Steps*); the assassination attempt at the crowded charity ball (*The Man Who Knew Too Much*): the gun aimed from behind the curtain (Hitchcock has a mania for guns): and finally, as a last grab at a straw for thrills, the fall from a great height (*Foreign Correspondent*): the saboteur, tracked down at last, falls to his death from the outstretched arm of the Statue of Liberty. Here, it must be admitted, the suspense was stepped-up to an almost unbearable pitch, as Hitchcock, obviously relishing the audience's discomfit, and determined to give the last twist to the screw, gloated over a gigantic close-up of the seams of the man's coat slowly parting, one by one, as he hangs in mid-air. Justified, of course, for an American audience unfamiliar with his repertoire, but with all due respect to the craftsman's pride in his tricks of technique, secondhand. For the rest, a third-rate script, conventional characterisation, and stump speeches about democracy which might have come from Groucho Marx, but were, in fact written by Dorothy Thompson, sandwiched between the clichés of melodrama and the stale tricks: the attempt to blow up Boulder Dam; the warship sabotaged on the slipway (library shot of the " Normandie " on her side in New York harbour). As a hot-off-the-press thriller, *Saboteur* was as flat as yesterday's headlines.

With *Shadow of a Doubt* Hitchcock returned to the very top of his form: exciting, original, finely conceived, and with a well-rounded characterisation. And here, one felt, emerged the chronicle of small-town life which *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* set out and so conspicuously failed to be. As a background to murder and attempted murder, it was doubly successful, neatly contrasting the elaborate cunning of the murderer's mind with the easy, open, unsuspecting friendliness of the family. Hitchcock, who is calculating and cold-blooded, and who once murdered a small boy in a bus in the middle of Piccadilly Circus (*Sabotage,* 1937), went ahead with the preparations for his climax with great gusto and without a trace of remorse, until, relenting at the last moment (once again as a concession to the ubiquitous box-office, and only as an afterthought to spare anyone's feelings—least of all those of his producer) he sent Uncle Charlie to a well-deserved fate under the wheels of a train: a visual shock for which his previous record should have been (but wasn't altogether) sufficient warning.

Sound, always used by Hitchcock with imagination, if not always with discretion, was here employed with genius. There was one moment earlier on, before the horrors had begun, when the camera

paused for a moment on the threshold of the mid-Western home, and the microphone caught the aimless, disconnected small-talk of the household as it went about its preparations for the evening meal: thoughts half-spoken aloud, sentences begun and left unfinished, in the air: the "small-change" of ordinary human intercourse caught with absolute fidelity. Whether the credit is Hitchcock's or Thornton Wilder's, who was partly responsible for the script, it is difficult to say. It was probably a little of both; and this, with the well-observed family gallery, made *Shadow of a Doubt* Hitchcock's most all-round satisfying thriller since *Sabotage* in 1937.

Alas, in *Lifeboat*, we were back in his least attractive vein of the Hollywood-pretentious. A trick film, pure and simple, *Lifeboat* depended for its effects on the novelty of its setting and background: an open boat into which are packed the survivors of a wartime shipwreck, with, for good measure, the captain of the U-boat responsible for their predicament. So far so good. Unfortunately, on this initially promising dramatis personæ, Hitchcock saw fit to impose yet another of his pseudo-Shavian debates on the pros and cons of popular democracy (a fashion common to the Hollywood film of the mid-war years). The U-boat captain became the apostle of a creed not noticeably different from the aggressive, go-getting, typical American ideology of many a Hollywood film not even remotely connected with the war, while the other occupants of the boat variously quarrelled, gambled, made love, or jumped overboard from sheer boredom, and were obviously meant to represent the many-faceted democracy which, as Hitchcock is perfectly well aware, exists nowhere outside the pages of "The Saturday Evening Post" and the fevered brains of harassed script writers (or maybe directors who have overlooked what Hitchcock obviously lost in the studio tank: a story line).

It is no mere coincidence that *Spellbound*, Hitchcock's latest film to be publicly shown, pokes gentle fun at psychiatry, or rather the popular bookstall-psychiatry so fashionable at the moment. It would be a mistake to regard *Spellbound* as a serious attempt to examine the possibilities of psychiatry as an adjunct to criminology (which is obviously Hitchcock's sole interest in the subject), despite the solemn, pretentious foreword which makes claims the film does not even attempt to qualify.

All the same, *Spellbound* is an uncommonly good thriller which renews hope for Hitchcock's future, despite an embarrassing *richesse* of camera tricks and typical "business": a glass of milk tilted at the camera; a gun fired at the audience; familiar tricks with sound: the shriek of a train whistle at a moment of crisis; and one scene which sticks out like a sore thumb: a scene composed within the framework of a screen dominated by a huge close-up of an open razor.

However irritating as a performance these self-conscious tricks become, the sharp visual image (blurred of late) is there again, and although the tempo of the film is slow, the cutting is beautifully timed, and obviously the work of Hitchcock himself. There is

none of that perfunctory "type" character drawing so evident in *Saboteur* and *Lifeboat*. Those minor characters, who appear often for a mere thirty seconds or so, and are never seen or heard of again, but who give verisimilitude to his somewhat threadbare, makeshift plots, and are among his happiest creations, are well represented again: the baffled Latvian diplomat in *Foreign Correspondent*, who so completely misunderstands the situation between the lovers, is here paralleled by the hotel detective with the flair for amateur psychology, who is nicely fooled by Miss Bergman.

There is also one of those rapid shafts of satire which momentarily illuminate so much of Hitchcock's work, so swift they are liable to be overlooked. A radio announcer has just issued a description of a man wanted for murder. He concludes: "We now return you to the normal programme." Immediately, a deafening blast of jive is faded in, to be faded out almost as quickly as the scene dissolves.

Unfortunately, *Spellbound* is blighted with the most ill-advised incidental music ever to accompany a first-rate film. Menacing chords accompany every symptom and manifestation of Mr. Peck's condition; and the absurd climax is reached when, as Mr. Peck and Miss Bergman race down hill on skis, the music suggests that one has suddenly been transported back in time to 1914 or thereabouts, and the pit orchestra is doing its best to distract attention from the amateurish rear-projection by the enthusiasm of its efforts. Can it be that Hitchcock, who was once at pains to describe in a magazine article the dramatic significance of silence, has already forgotten his own good advice?

He has travelled a long way since 1939, from the theatrically effective *Rebecca* to the case-book humours of *Spellbound*. His future development remains at once fascinating and unpredictable, since he still towers head and shoulders above the rank and file of Hollywood. No director has matured so slowly or in such an unlikely environment. His occasional lapses merely serve to prove once again that an artist is only as good as his material. He is a brilliant character comedian, most successful when he is not conscious of his artistry. He has discarded many of the mannerisms which marred his early work, although, as a viewing of *Spellbound* will disclose, many still remain.

With a lesser director one might suggest a change. But Hitchcock is unique. Crime is still his strongest *forte*. Unlike Fritz Lang, who has shown himself equal to any subject, Hitchcock loses power when he attempts any theme outside his native *genre*. Pursuit, which is still the basis of so apparently sophisticated a thriller as *Spellbound*, remains the essence of his most successful work. Suspense, his strongest drawing card, arises easily and naturally from his expert manipulation of the chase. And although I do not feel that he has done anything to equal the power of *Sabotage*, in 1937, *Spellbound* probably represents his most satisfying work in America to date.

With *Spellbound* one feels that the limit of basic ideas has been

reached; only the refinements of technique, the convolutions of plot, remain to be explored. The old, well-tried formula, with a secondary interest in character and motive, will probably continue to be the basis of his development for some time to come yet. His next film, entitled *Notorious*, promises to be another thriller, probably a throw-back to *Suspicion*. One would prefer him to tackle a serious theme: a novel by Graham Greene, for instance; *Brighton Rock* would be admirable, with just that opportunity for a deeper examination of character and motive which his pre-fabricated thriller plots do not always permit; or the film treatment of the Thompson-Bywater case which he has been half-promising to do for years; or maybe a novel by Georges Simenon. *Spellbound*, which marks a certain breakaway from the flippant treatment of crime so characteristic of his work in general so far, may be a beginning. What he needs now is the producer who will give him the chance to go on. If Mr. Selznick won't oblige, perhaps Mr. Rank will?

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"IVAN THE TERRIBLE"

Reviewed by CHARLES TURNER

WHATEVER its merits or demerits from the visual aspect, there is no disputing, I think, that this film is a great achievement. I make this reservation because, from the higher standards of film continuity, this work is seen to be wanting.

On the other hand, I have no hestitation in adding that the sound track is the finest I have ever listened to. Its perfect sequences could be followed, probably, with equal pleasure over a broadcasting set and would be found to have their own form.

For this inspiration it is, therefore, a pleasure to be able to record that Serge Prokoviev has reverted to folk sources—not forgetting Moussorgsky—and become at last a truly Russian composer. Some of the vocal and orchestral work has the grandeur, if not the originality, of "Boris Godunov."

As for Eisenstein, what shall we say? A richer experience in every way than *Alexander Nevsky*, because less crude and synthetic, this technique, nevertheless, borrows lavishly from theatre and so much from Russian tradition that it is very hard indeed to select even a single length of continuity and regard it as a thumbprint.

In no way greater, then, than Pudovkin, because of his continuous synthesis from the stock of general ideas, rather like a general who has made himself master of the scholastic arts of strategy, nevertheless Eisenstein takes the field. His synopsis resembles those of Shakespeare in being adequate to its idealism but in no other respect satisfying. Such a work of art, incidentally, be it noted for the benefit of Wardour Street, can only be turned out in a time and place when the people have a high sense of their mission and are living up to it, in spite of selfish aims. For, make no mistake, whatever be the political bias involved, this experience of greatness is what is happening to the Russian people as it did to the English four hundred years ago.

Here is a flow of magic for eye and ear, calculated to subdue—beautiful language, beautiful movement, beautiful song—and the greatest thing to be said of it is that, at times and on the whole, it leaves its narrow ideological context and takes a view over the world of humanity, one which must be taken from time to time in hope and fresh promise, if people are to survive.

For we are undoubtedly approaching a time—not, perhaps, so far distant—when the public will pulse with a vitality never attained before and the social order will present a picture, less of convention and expedience than of quality and everlasting purpose. And this statement is not in any way a matter of politics but inescapable development, a part of the time-plan of the universe.

We may be snuffed out finally, decay or petrify, but first we are going to live fully.

IVAN THE TERRIBLE.

Photo : Soviet Film Agency.

Above is Cherkasov as Ivan the Terrible, grieving at his wife's coffin, in the film by Eisenstein recently shown in London. One of the most notable Soviet films seen here during the war, "Ivan the Terrible" is, as Charles Turner remarks, "a great achievement."

Australia's Film Future

by JOHN K. NEWNHAM

WIDE new vistas have been opened up for the British and Australian film industries with the making of *The Overlanders*. A courageous experiment has succeeded and is leading to big things. Nearly three years have passed since Michael Balcon and director Watt sat down in Balcon's large, tidy office at Ealing Studios and talked about the possibilities of making films in Australia.

Harry was bursting with enthusiasm over the project. Perhaps there was a touch of selfishness about it. "I made up my mind when I went into movies," he once confessed, "that the film industry would help me to see all the parts of the world I'd always wanted to visit and at the film industry's expense." Besides, he preferred making his pictures out of doors, a heart-breaking task in this country but exciting and wide in its scope overseas.

But there was more than selfishness in his enthusiasm. Australia was almost virgin country so far as filming was concerned, offering untold possibilities in new, spacious backgrounds, good meaty subjects, fresh characters, and above all, pictures of general interest dealing with essentially British themes which would get right off the beaten track.

Henry Watt is a man with pioneering instincts. In his early days he sailed an open boat across the Atlantic. He knocked around Canada. He took any and every job that sounded at all interesting.

So one can well understand why Harry was genuinely enthusiastic about the idea of film-making in Australia, and when he went he spent a couple of years over there before returning with *The Overlanders*.

There was a lot of work to be done on *The Overlanders* on his return to Ealing, and it was not until October that the film reached completion and public showing. Harry, champing at the bit to be off again to Australia, waited for *The Overlanders* to be released in London, assured himself that his effort had been crowned with success, then shot off to the Antipodes again with the plaudits of the critics still ringing in his ears.

On his return from his *Overlanders* location, Harry had quite a lot to say about film-making possibilities in Australia.

"In the Dominions," he remarked "is the chance for the British film industry, already with its tail up, to consolidate its position vis-a-vis Hollywood. The outdoor action picture, shot in real exteriors, has always been an American monopoly. We can

Photo: Ealing.

"THE OVERLANDERS."

Chips Rafferty, seen above in "The Overlanders," directed in Australia by Harry Watt, is one of the leading film actors in that country. Previously seen in "20,000 Horsemen," he is now working in the second Harry Watt Australian film, as yet untitled.

challenge this monopoly in our Dominion films. And, more importantly, we can interchange a knowledge of each other's countries, which is still sadly lacking. By creating a solid foundation to a film industry in a young country like Australia we can establish the cultural roots that transform a country into a nation. By exchanging ideologies we can smooth out differences. And finally and practically, we can reinvest the monies earned by British films, thus creating employment and national income, instead of transferring it back to London, as American money goes back to Hollywood. I hope this Empire film idea comes off; personally I'm willing to stake my career and future on it."

Sydney is Australia's film centre, and all the studios, with one exception, can be found there. They total the humble figure of four. There is one large studio in operation, there are two other small ones, and one which has been purchased by Rank and is in the process of being modernised and enlarged. Jack Bruce, who runs one of the smaller concerns, is now building a new large one, and plans for two other studios have been announced. Apart from Sydney, there is one studio in Melbourne.

The Australians have a genius for improvisation. The best cameraman in the country made his own camera—and he claims that it is comparable with Hollywood's best. The technical situation is improving, but the problem of technicians is going to be serious before long. Australia has a nucleus of technicians comparable with any, but it is very small, and has been kept smaller than it might have been by the lack of production and by the fact that the Americans have taken so many of them to Hollywood.

So while there may be a sufficient number of trained personnel to cater for Australia's current productions, there will be a grave shortage in the very near future. Harry Watt used as many local technicians as possible during the production of *The Overlanders*, but he had key men from Britain with him, and he will again be taking key men from Ealing when he gets down to his next picture.

You can count the number of Australian feature pictures made since the beginning of the war on the fingers of two hands. Believe it or not, they have all been shown in this country. Those we have seen are *Ants in His Pants, Dad Rudd, M.P.*, 40,000 *Horsemen* and *The Rats of Tobruk*. The first two were slapstick comedies and were scarcely seen at all; the other two, both war subjects, had wider releases and were very well received. Since then, Ealing has made *The Overlanders*, and there are three others completed but not yet shown in Britain—*Smithy, A Son is Born* and the Rank film, *Bush Christmas*.

On top of these Australia has produced some hundreds of short propaganda subjects during the war years, and these occupied most of the attention of the film-makers there. The technicians have their own union, and now the powerful Stage Equity is forming a film section. Equity is also drafting out an award to be presented annually for the best work of the year.

But from the point of view of British producers, interest in Australia is more on its possibilities for outdoor pictures than those which can be produced inside a studio. A certain number of interior scenes will aways be necessary, of course, and English-sponsored production will be considerably encouraged by the presence of well-equipped Australian studios which will enable pictures to be made in their entirety there instead of having to put the finishing touches to them back in this country.

We shall not know for a time just what Harry Watt's next subject will be. He has two or three stories in mind, but everything depends on the outcome of his present visit. Last time he was in Australia he dickered with five stories before settling on *The Overlanders,* with its story of the epic overland trek of 1,000 cattle when Japanese invasion was threatening.

This time, Harry intends to look around for a few months, and then return to England to make final plans and collect key personnel. He will probably take Chips Rafferty, star of *The Overlanders,* back with him. Chips is at present in Britain, brought here by Balcon to appear in *The Loves of Joanna Godden.* Watt will also take more equipment with him this time. Lack of equipment was one of his major problems during the making of *The Overlanders.*

There will, too, be a widespread star-search in Australia. Time and money will be spent on this. Professional players and unknowns will be given a chance, and Harry is hoping to unearth some more Daphne Campbells. He found Daphne, leading lady of *The Overlanders,* when she was a corporal nursing orderly. She was on leave in Sydney, and Harry spotted her when she was doing some shopping in a department store.

Although the home production may settle down to a more or less routine job of movie-making, with its normal quota of interior and exterior scenes, and therefore relatively comfortable, English units working out there and specialising on outdoor subjects are likely to find conditions pretty rough.

The Overlanders unit lived under anything but comfortable conditions, for a large part of the time in an abandoned Army camp, travelling in open Army trucks, building roads, stockades, aerodromes and film sets themselves. There was no film trickery to help them. The players had no doubles, and did their own riding, swimming, climbing and fighting. They had accidents (one man had to be flown over a thousand miles to hospital), but they also had fun. Perhaps it was this real living that helped more than anything else to lift *The Overlanders* right out of the conventional screen rut and made it breathe realism. This film proved, at any rate, that there is an enormous future for film production in Australia, and with the increasing co-operation between Australia and this country, our own film industry can benefit to an equal degree.

GOOD FILMS can make money

says JAMES GARLAND

A GROWING public demand for good books, music and plays is reported from all quarters, but as yet there has been little promise of any rise in the cultural standard of films. As an artistic medium the popular screen is generally dismissed as unworthy of serious consideration, and its apparent failure to make the grade is put down to the fact that it is in the hands of Big Business.

There is no real justification, however, for this pessimistic attitude regarding the future of the screen, and there is hope that the Ugly Duckling of the arts may yet occupy an honourable position among them.

Big Business is not incompatible with Art, and the cinema is not alone among the arts in being run on a commercial basis. In all fields of entertainment and culture, work of merit is produced only because there is a profitable market for it, and the standards observed depend in the long run on public demand. Why is it, then, that the cinema has no share in the recent cultural "boom?"

The trouble is that producers' obsession with box-office returns is thick-headed rather than hard-headed. They assume that the cinema audience is the one fixed quantity in a changing world, and continue to act on the standards which prevailed years ago when films as well as audiences were in their infancy. Developments in film technique are hailed enthusiastically, but the development in public taste is ignored. Books and articles on films deal with stars, producers, directors, technicians, even with the critics themselves, but the all-important audience is summarily dismissed as "queue-fodder."

A less ill-considered assessment of the present-day audience would reveal that the demand for intelligence in entertainment and integrity in art is no longer restricted to the recognised intellectual classes and the professional critic. It is widespread throughout the cinema. The interest stirring in other fields of art comes from the "common people," and the man who pays half a guinea or more for a good book and almost as much for a theatre or concert seat does not abandon all his cultural ideals as soon as he joins the queue for the one-and-nines.

The man in the queue appreciates a good film as much as anybody, but because his appreciation is instinctive and inarticulate rather than analytical he is not credited with having any critical

faculties at all. A moment's thought, however, will recall scarcely a single instance of a *good* film that was not also extremely popular, whereas there have been innumerable "popular" films that failed miserably in their attempts to please. This is clear evidence that the public is not entirely undiscriminating.

A good film depends for its effect more on emotional impact than on intellectual considerations, but it is a mistake to think that the best way of appealing to the emotional susceptibilities of an audience is by sacrificing artistic integrity to spurious sentiment. The film which appeals to the intellect appeals also to the instincts, and stirs emotions far more genuine and profound than the cheap laughs and facile tears engendered by the irrelevancies and vulgarisation designed to make serious films palatable to a supposedly flippant audience. That sort of box-office appeal serves only to dispel the "atmosphere" on which emotional impact largely depends, and which the flexible and unrestricted nature of film technique is ideally suited to achieve. Artistic integrity is as essential as technical artistry to the creation of the emotional impact which alone is universally appreciated.

Moreover, it must be remembered that the present generation has been brought up on films, whilst other fields of culture have been within less easy reach. The recent "boom" in literature, theatre and music is backed by no adequate knowledge or experience, but in the cinema a life-time of experience is just waiting for something to "boom" about.

With the public beginning to take an intelligent interest in culture and art of all kinds it is time that the Moguls of the cinema began to take a more intelligent interest in their public. Because the average cinema-goer is not particularly intellectual it does not mean that he is unintelligent, and he is becoming increasingly intolerant of films that insult his intelligence. It is true that money still pours nightly into the box-offices, but that is only because the cinema happens to be the one cheap entertainment readily available. If films of genuine artistic quality were to enter the field in competition they would quickly win more universal popularity.

The real interests of Big Business and of Art in the cinema to-day are not incompatible. They are identical. Box-office returns are the reasonable and legitimate aim of the producers, but in a competitive market genuine quality is the surest means to that end.

The next publication uniform with "Film Miscellany" will be

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UNSUNG HEROES behind the lens

by ERASMUS URBAN

DANNY Kaye, in one of his less lunatic moments, used to sing of the poor suffering cinema audience that have to endure interminable film credits before they are able to see the film. What might be a boring list to the public is nowhere near complete, however, for the majority of film workers, all of whom might, with justifiable annoyance, cry, "Why isn't my name there?"

Owing to the co-operative nature of film production, of necessity, many of the vital contributions to a picture must remain un-noted and unsung. Yet without this contribution, the technical knowledge people are able to give, in no way would the finished film have the balance it has . . . or should have.

There are countless departments and grades in film production, all playing their necessary part in the making of a film. Take an average production. When the heroine gaily laughs a silvery trill, it is the "boom swinger," no credit earner he, who pulls the microphone a little higher to get the true sound of laughter and not to pick up a distorted noise that would remind the audience of the thundering hooves of a galloping herd of buffaloes. And the "spark" who keeps a lamp spotlighted under a star's eyes to remove wrinkles that have appeared after last night's party will not find *his* name on a list of credits.

Search where you will through the list you will never find the name of the "focus puller" who brilliantly alters the focus when the featured player does not quite step on the exact spot that has been arranged for him during rehearsals. The actor probably never realises just how much the focus puller has helped his career by keeping his features recognisable instead of letting them fade out of focus and into the producer's forgetfulness.

Everyone knows of the amount of research that goes to the making of a film: how a producer insists, for instance, that the buckles on a highwayman's shoes are correctly in period, how (and this is an actual fact) a famous producer once engaged the services of an eminent astronomer to chart the positions of the planets one night during the early Chrisian era for a film dealing with the Roman Empire. These are the exaggerations of film-making, publicity highlights to catch the public's eye, but there are also many real experts whose job is just dull routine. These people have to know everything about anything, or better still, how to find it out. They can tell you how a coroner's court is conducted, how a boatman in North Shields handles a boat, the procedure for serving venison at State banquets. They even know where to get some genuine Alamein sand for a battle sequence. Do you see their names on a list of credits? But definitely no.

Does the general public know what a "grips" is? Most people, at some time in their lives, have used a camera and so feel competent enough to decide whether the film is well-photographed or not. Yet very rarely do they notice whether the "grips" has done a good job or not (and if they *do* notice then the job has been badly done).

When Handsome Harry the Hero calls his beloved a nasty name because he saw her kissing another man (he doesn't know it is her brother until the last reel), and then the next thing you know you are up close to the heroine watching the tears start from her eyes, it is the "grips" who has brought you there. Unobtrusively he has slowly pushed the camera, under cover of your interest in the heroine's anguish, until you are close enough almost to *feel* her sorrow. One movement jerked, one push out of rhythm and you become conscious of a camera in a studio, and the emotional mood is lost. And, of course, the "grips" name appears on the list of credits not at all.

Rarely is it that the public ever hears of these stout fellows, and others. There is the electrician who keeps the carbon arc burning so quietly that it does not hiss into the microphone; the "chippy" who keeps the furniture in good repair so that it does not creak, the "tubular man" who makes the set strong enough to bear the artists so that their footfalls won't sound into the microphone; the "hygiene man" with the spray that keeps the catarrh incidence down and thus prevents the actors' sibilants from hissing; the "flit man" who keeps the flies away from buzzing into your ears; and "sound maintenance" who keeps the equipment in such good repair that the microphone is able to pick up all these extraneous noises. Do you ever hear about any of the above? You know the answer by now.

And what of the plasterers, moulders, sensiometric controllers, moulders, set designers, production assistants, special effects, make-up, projectionists, wardrobe, neg. developers, cutters, prop. men, continuity girls, stand-by painter, stage hands, and so on? All play their part and all contribute their essential roles to the successful completion of the film, and, breathe it gently, each one is firmly convinced that the star's importance to the film has been unduly exaggerated by the publicity office. In fact, if the truth were told, they haven't got that sense of awe one would expect from people working so close to the Great Ones. Eric Portman tells a story that slyly illustrates the average studio worker's attitude to the stars. Whilst working on the film *Daybreak*, he had to play a scene where he searches for something in the dark. The lighting cameraman thought that a normal torch did not give sufficient illumination for the shot. It was decided to fake a torch, and light it from the electrical supply. To achieve this, Eric had to have yards of flex threaded round his waist, along his back and down his sleeve to the prop torch he was carrying. When all was ready and he was suitably wired Portman was much amused to hear the floor electrician cry "O.K., plug in the actor!"

This does not mean that studio workers are not engrossed in their work. On the contrary there are few other industries where there is so much interest and enthusiasm shown in a job than in the film industry. Technicians have a saying, "Once you're in it you never leave it." So next time you get bored with what you consider a lengthy list of screen credits, just give a thought to those unsung heroes who never will make the credits, the essential back room boys of the picture business.

Do we need Film Critics?

asks RICHARD KAYNE

THE film critic is an unfathomable creature, who has to sit through a slice of technicoloured or highly-coloured nonsense at approximateily half-past ten in the morning. If it happens to be a "major production" he has to be present at a reception after the show, in order to meet the star of the film, who has just popped over from America to make a lightning personal appearance, before starting on a new "major" production," bigger and better than before. And how used we are to that unending string of meaningless superlatives which herald in the latest effort, long before we actually see it. But it is the public who will be disappointed when the epic comes to their local Odeon or Palace.

Yet in spite of the many warnings that they have had, the British public flock to *Salome, Where She Danced* and, after standing for about an hour in a queue in the pouring rain, joyfully pay their one-and-nine and, apparently, lap it all up. No matter how hard the critics are on films like *The Wicked Lady, Caravan* or *Madonna of the Seven Moons,* in they troop in the hope that they will see the once promising star of *The Lady Vanishes* enjoying worse than death (or nearly) at the hands of the star of that excellent and unpretentious film *I Met A Murderer.*

And, on the other hand, many of the really good British pictures are box-office failures. Noel Coward's *Brief Encounter* was a financial flop in Scotland and elsewhere and yet the critics are agreed that it was one of the best films ever to come out of any British studio. British films can hold their own with anything that Hollywood has done, as long as they are kept modest and unpretentious. But if Mr. Rank thinks that the British musical has come of age with his production of *London Town,* he is making a grave mistake.

Even the average Hollywood musical makes some attempt at a plot, and sometimes a little originality and ingenuity are used to introduce the lavish spectacle, into a more or less threadbare and commonplace story, but Mr. Rank's *London Town* was even more plotless than anything Hollywood has done.

But as Denis Myers has said, "Hollywood is as much out of date as a generic term for the American film industry, as Elstree is for the British." Nevertheless, it is more convenient to refer to Los Angeles, Universal City, etc., as Hollywood, which has of late become synonymous with trash. Actually a number of really good films have come out of America in recent years, including *The Southerner, King's Row* and, of course, the first few Orson Welles films. But compare the short list of critics' favourites with the

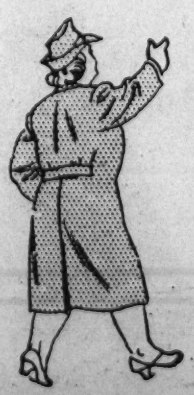
Hollywood output. Just pause to think of the vulgar and trite pictures that the critic is forced to see. Think for one horrible second of the thousand and one mornings spent gazing at lamentable efforts in the same street as *Sentimental Journey* and *Do You Love Me*! and you will begin to understand why the pens of C. A. Lejeune and Dilys Powell are so often dipped in vitriol instead of Swan or Quink.

Far too many of the critics, however, write about the films in question, instead of attempting to criticise them. Mr. Agate usually forgets even to write about them, but is excused on the grounds that whatever he chooses to say will either be amusingly witty or of great interest. In an article in the *Strand* he once wrote:—

"It doesn't matter whether one has written good criticism or bad, for the reason that it doesn't matter whether you pour dirty water on a duck's back or the best champagne. Your film magnate is impervious to criticism."

He had, in a previous paragraph, said that he did not believe that the slightest attention had ever been paid by anybody to anything that he had written. Perhaps that goes for the other critics as well? After all, if Mr. and Mrs. Jones are in the habit of going to the Gaumont every Friday night, nothing that Richard Winnington has to say will stop them from going. Indeed, there are some people who judge a film from the size of the queue.

Is it, therefore, surprising that the critics hide under their hard-boiled attitude a sentimental yearning for the good old silent days? Perhaps not. Yet every critic has his or her own private little gallery of favourite performances. You cannot blame them for digging up the past every other week. Indeed, we are all too familiar with the doyen's reference to Duse, the Divine Sarah, or even Melpomene or Back-to-Methuselahism. I myself have a favourite little gallery that includes, for example, Katine Paxinou in *For Whom The Bell Tolls,* Margaret O'Brien in *Jane Eyre* and Michael Chekhov in *Spectre of the Rose.* Nowadays it is seldom that one sees really great screen acting, and even then it is not always appreciated by the great mass of cinemagoers who don't know ham from spam, and who never read the critics anyway.



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Recent Documentaries

Reviewed by JACK LINDSAY

THE outstanding documentary film of the last few months has been *The Way We Live*, written and directed by Jill Craigie.

This film is not only one of the best long documentaries we have made, but is also noteworthy for the defeat it inflicted on the enemies of documentary (the enemies in fact of all sincere film-work). The commercial advisers, supposed to have a sure nose for what the public likes, said with a loud and assured voice that *The Way We Live* would not do. The public wouldn't stand for such a film, they said; and, indeed, but for the agitation of the critics in the newspapers and elsewhere, the film would have been shelved. When it was given a try-out it was found highly successful; and if I may judge by the hearty applause it got when I saw it at the Odeon, the audience had come solely to see it and not to see the gaudy and feeble feature which it accompanied.

Previously, in *Out of Chaos*, Jill Craigie made a praiseworthy atempt to show the creative processes behind modern painting. It was only partially successful, but showed her readiness to try new approaches. In *The Way We Live* she was given a good chance—a budget not so far below that of some of our pre-war features—and she made the most of it. Deciding to do a film on town-planning in the post-war period, she wisely picked on a particular episode rather than a general coverage—Rotha had so powerfully dealt with many of the general aspects of housing previously in *Land of Promises*. She selected Plymouth, which lost its central area in the blitzes and for which a very fine reconstruction plan has been brought forward; and set herself to sort the subject out from two angles—from that of the outsider who is trying to get a general focus on the issues of reconstruction, and from that of one of the implicated families. Thus, one gets a maximum of fullness in the presentation; one approaches the subject with a generally questioning and sifting viewpoint and also with a sense of the confused and urgent problems of the disorganised family wanting to get its roots back into city life. The two levels come together and provide the complete picture. Or rather, that is what the film hopes to do.

Despite some heavy going, on the whole it does carry out that aim. In handling the uprooted family Jill Craigie is almost uniformly successful and manages some moments of delicate comedy; she disentangles the various characters of the family and keeps them alive for us right through. And some very fine acting is contributed by her group of non-professionals. For the outsider who seeks the general focus she chooses a returned soldier of an

intellectual cast, who goes to Plymouth because he wants to find what is happening in the Britain with which he has lost touch. Anxious not to make premature and over-easy solutions, Miss Craigie turns her intellectual into something of a dull dog, whose endless trudging and grim face do not quite convince us that he has either the human warmth or intellectual penetration to understand what is really happening in Plymouth. Still, the picture holds for almost every foot of its hour's run; and the story does come together and leave us with a satisfying full perception of what has happened, what has broken the old ways of living and brought a large number of new possibilities into being, and what is the British Way which ultimately controls the breaking and the re-making.

But though one must give the picture very high praise, one can scarcely agree that it inaugurates a new sort of documentary. In some trade circles, which initially wanted to see the film shelved, the suggestion has been made that here is something quite new, the documentary of the future. And an effort is made to use the film to deprecate Rotha's *Land of Promises* as a documentary which is both argumentative and propagandist. Such remarks, however, are the last-ditch attempt of the anti-documentary advocates, who had had to surrender to Miss Craigie, to use her success to block the way to other important workers in the same field. There are some new elements in *The Way We Live,* as there are in any really good documentary; but if one is to look for a blazer of new tracks, one would certainly turn rather to Rotha, who has done so much to find ways of introducing a rich intellectual movement and clash of opinions into documentary technique. *The Way We Live* is a very capable and sincere extension of documentary method, which needs no dispraise of other productions to bring out its many merits.

I choose *Good Neighbours,* directed by Humphrey Swingler, with script by Jack Common, to follow *The Way We Live,* because this too is a film which tells us a lot about the way we live and which shows with a lively understanding the break, and the defeat of the break, in our social habits. A much shorter work, it lacks the pretty wit of Jill Craigie's film, but puts in its place a greater warmth. Its story is that of the building of a community centre, and Swingler was well advised to choose the Aberdeen location. For in a film that has no large space in which to deploy its character-movements, the homely folk-quality of Scots life makes the tale of the Centre more plausible and compelling. The opening sequences which depict the heavy monotony of the township's streets in the dusk as the workers drift home are especially effective, and provide the right emtional basis for the story of the struggle to escape from the closed-in dullness and to found a community centre. Swingler has shown in this film that he has a rich human sympathy and the capacity to order his effects, and his development should be watched.

In *English Criminal Justice* Ken Annakin breaks what is for him new ground. Here he has for subject neither the countryside

nor the common folk among whom he has previously shown himself so excellently at home. This British Council film sets out to show the way our criminal law works and in particular to bring out those aspects which it does not share with other systems. It is extremely workmanlike. The scenes in the local court and at the Old Bailey are convincing, and make all the points they have decided to make. This kind of expository film can hardly achieve more. In no way exciting or penetrating, it does its limited job with a minimum of fuss. If one has any criticisms, they apply to the kind of restricted objective which the film's field of reference involves. No legal system is quite so nice and tidy and gentlemanly as a treatment of this narrowed-down sort inevitably makes out. But Annakin has shown that if he is set a simple didactic aim he can achieve it with an admirable economy. His first feature film, *Holiday Camp,* for Sydney Box, should prove interesting.

Jack Lee in *Children on Trial* also has a legal problem, which he is able to treat at good length (65 minutes). He thus has elbow-room to indicate some of the human complexity involved. This is a very good documentary: the family of the delinquent lad, and the lad's relations with his street-pals are so deftly and sensitively handled that there is no British feature director who could not learn something from them. Throughout, the children are depicted with this clear inner sympathy, which makes the film important. The weakness appears in the adults, those who have to deal with the children and regenerate them. They continually come out as priggish—though the headmaster warms up into humanity in the later sections. The priggishness is not merely a matter of weak lines or inadequate acting: it rather lies at the root of the method in a film such as this. The story has to show regeneration of character, an extremely difficult matter to treat artistically. Where writers like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy have had to call on the deepest powers of their genius to get anything like verisimilitude, how is a documentary lasting an hour and embracing a great deal of factual information to achieve complete success?

The result is that the regenerating process is inevitably oversimplified, telescoped. When the lad (who does a magnificent job of acting) gives one of his slight wincing movements of contempt at the good advice of his elders, all our sympathies go out to him; and we know that it is going to be a hell of a tug-of-war before he admits that society can have anything but dirty intentions towards him. The problem of creating an inner discipline among children bred to a bitter anarchism (the only thing that can keep their souls alive in the slum-infernos of degradation), is very complicated indeed. Therefore, to say that the film does not fully succeed is only to say that it is one more brave attempt to face up to a very tangled issue. The lad and the girl show up as entire human beings, and for this alone the film deserves a very high mark and stands out as much more worth seeing than at least ninety-seven out of every hundred features. Even the adults spring to life at moments, as when the teacher in the girl's reformatory, coming from a staid scene where the girl's leg movements in

response to radio jazz have hinted the hidden deep resistances, bursts out that she feels useless and foolish among girls who in their early teens have seen far more of life than she ever will. If our film industry was even remotely responsible socially and artistically, Jack Lee's success in this film would mean his being given the chance of treating the theme of the delinquent adolescent in a full-length feature film.

Can We Be Rich? by Cecil Musk is largely made up of a talk by Geoffrey Crowther. Crowther talks very well, and argues out his case for increased productivity with suave clarity. But after Rotha the documentary dare not, I feel, return to the animated or illustrated lecture. Rotha has shown how a controversial subject can be courageously treated by a rich movement of contrasted patterns; and once that has been decisively accomplished, the simpler method becomes outmoded. Musk does his job well; the picture runs smoothly; the photography is good; the illustrations well selected. But the method won't do. Not even the introduction later of two opposed figures, trade-unionist and industrialist, on the other side of Crowther's table, and their mild argument, compensates for the lack of that clash and movement of ideas which Rotha has shown how to express filmically. I am not suggesting that other directors should imitate Rotha. What I mean is that they dare not ignore the intellectual tempo and incisiveness which he has introduced into the discussion film. Let them of course find their own solutions, but let them start by recognising that Rotha has once and for all broken up the simple lecture-exposition into its living components, and that the problem is to explore the given material for its own movement, its own oppositions and appositions, not to choose out bits to illustrate a slowly moving thesis. One result of the lecture method is that Crowther's remarks, generally indisputable, suggest too little at the end the real problems of "capital and labour," here shown agreeing over his nice clean table how to get together to raise productivity.

Theirs Is The Glory takes its place with *Western Approaches* as the most moving reconstruction of contemporary history to come from Britain in recent years. It is excellently done, direct and sincere and provides an unforgettable filmic experience, all the more moving when one realises the authenticity of this record of high courage. Desmond Hurst is to be congratulated on a fine job of direction.

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On the Right.

Top: **A scene from Jack Lee's "Children On Trial," which deals with juvenile delinquency. (Crown.)**

Bottom: **Laurie Friedman photographing a scene from "The Way We Live" (Two Cities). Director Jill Craigie is seen standing behind the camera.**

some recent films

Reviewed by PETER NOBLE

I SEEM to have left a minimum of space to deal with a score of new films, so will have to content myself with a brief survey of the quarter, and a sentence or two on the outstanding productions of the period. Jack Lindsay has remarked elsewhere on the high quality of two recent British films, one of the best documentaries of the year, Jill Craigie's *The Way We Live,* and one of the best documentary productions of all time, *Theirs Is The Glory,* directed by Brian Desmond Hurst. Both films set a new standard for documentaries reconstructing actual history. The latter is the story of the ill-fated Battle of Arnhem told with a minimum of sentiment. Quietly and unemotionally it presents the facts of the tragic drop to sudden death of thousands of young men in that memorable Spring of 1944. I doubt whether we shall see a better film of its kind for many years to come.

We can gloss over such romantic deviations from reality as Warners' *Devotion,* a film purporting to tell the story of the Brontës, and Gainsborough's *The Magic Bow,* also purporting to tell the story of Paganini. Both films are grossly inaccurate, but the American film is the better of the two since it has some small pretensions to taste. Whether the departure of Maurice Ostrer from the regions of Shepherd's Bush will now mean that the highly coloured series of "Gainsborough specials" will stop being produced at Lime Grove is a matter of general conjecture. Sidney Box's programme for 1947 looks promising, and it is to be hoped that the Gainsborough tradition will not exercise too strong an influence upon the producer of *The Seventh Veil.*

Marcel Carné is rapidly becoming the leading director in the Paris studios. His *Les Visiteurs du Soir* is a beautifully photographed and intelligent study of a mediæval fairy story. The final section of the film does not live up to the promising beginning, but the acting of Arletty and Jules Berry, plus the cinematic understanding of Carné, make this a worth-while film. We were recently privileged to see, at the Academy, two French revivals, the work of that strange young genius, Jean Vigo. Both films, *Zero de Conduite* and *L'Atalante,* demonstrated a highly original sense of cinema. The former, a fantasy about a boy's school, is frankly surrealist, but its jokes are endearing, and it has wit. *L'Atalante*—a curiously photographed record of a few days in the life of a Paris barge—had that exquisite actor Michel Simon to give us some unusually good moments.

Rex Harrison makes his American debut in John Cromwell's *Anna and the King of Siam,* a surprisingly well done study of an

English governess who went to Siam in the 1860's and stayed to help govern not the children but the king. Hollywood is, however, full of surprises and *The Searching Wind,* directed by William Dieterle, is another of them. Telling the story of an American diplomat's policy of appeasement between the two wars, it has some stodgy moments and a bad final sequence, but it was nevertheless remarkably adult and beautifully acted by Sylvia Sidney, Robert Young and Dudley Digges.

Charles Turner has dealt elsewhere with Eisenstein's *Ivan The Terrible,* and none of the Soviet films recently seen can approach this film for sheer pictorial beauty. *A propos* of this, the reason for the lessening of standards in Russian films during the past two or three years is something which might repay careful study. Perhaps we will examine this subject in the next issue.

The much-vaunted *London Town,* directed by Wesley Ruggles, brought by Rank from Hollywood, proves to be a top-heavy and tasteless musical, whose only bright spots are the ones featuring that inimitable comedian, Sid Field. Hollywood can do this sort of film much better than Britain and I can see no point in our producers endeavouring to compete in a field which is peculiarly American. For example, Warners have produced quite an interesting musical based on the life of Cole Porter, called *Night and Day.* I would have said that the life of Porter, who came from a well-to-do family and did not have the same struggle for recognition as many other contemporary composers, contained very little dramatic interest, but Michael Curtiz has imbued it with a certain naive charm, spoiled only by occasional lapses. One of these occurs when Alexis Smith tries to make Cary Grant (Cole Porter) take some financial assistance with the remark, " Shakespeare was helped over his bad times by Mrs. Shakespeare, remember? " An even better example of the " super " Hollywood musical is *The Jolson Story,* which has been two years in the making and reveals itself as a fairly straightforward story of the rise of a little Jewish boy, the son of poor parents, to become America's premier showman. Larry Parks gives an almost uncanny impersonation of Jolson and indicates that he is a young actor whose early training at the Group Theatre in New York has given him the basic attributes which may lead to many more outstanding film performances. Both *The Jolson Story, Night and Day* and the delightful Crosby-Astaire film *Blue Skies* make *London Town* look pretty feeble, which should never have surprised anyone, least of all Mr. Ruggles or Mr. Rank.

We are much better at making the type of film to which we are nationally suited—*Brief Encounter, The Seventh Veil, Waterloo Road* and *Millions Like Us.* These are truly British films, the films which are internationnal simply because of their national flavour. We probably ought to have made *The Green Years,* a story of Scotland, from A. J. Cronin's novel, for we could not have made a worse job of it than M.G.M. has. For expressing in a B.B.C. broadcast her opinion that this was not a good picturisation of Scottish life, E. Arnot Robertson was censured by M.G.M. and taken off their Press list. It is good to hear that the B.B.C. have stood by

Mrs. Robertson, and that the Critics Circle have also passed a resolution condemning M.G.M.'s move. If Hollywood chooses to regard film production as big business then it should not complain if the public and the critics (who are the chosen representatives of the public) are not satisfied with their product. The fault does not lie with the public but with the producers, not with Mrs. Robertson or the other critics but with the film itself, the people behind the film and other films of its kind. M.G.M. have been much criticised for banning a responsible and highly-respected critic; they will most certainly suffer by the repercussions of their act.

Ben Hecht, heart-warming Hollywood rebel, has been given his head by Republic, who have let him write, produce and direct a film about ballet. Titled *The Spectre of the Rose*, it is refreshingly adult with some remarkably good dialogue and first-rate performances by Michael Chekhov as an effeminate impresario and Judith Anderson as an ageing ballet mistress. Hecht's film is one of the best seen this year and may quite easily start a trend in ballet pictures, though none of them is likely to be as good as this one. Two of my favourite actors of the "tough school," Paul Muni and Humphrey Bogart, were recently seen in interesting examples of their particular *genre*. Muni, a wonderfully capable actor, possessing streaks of brilliance, is better than his material in *Angel On My Shoulder*, in which he plays a gangster who comes back from Hell and takes the body of a High Court judge. The film did not get a good critical reception, yet I thought it tried to say something new and different, and said it quite well. In any case, Muni's powerful personality makes this a film to be seen in the same way that Bogart's nonchalant insolence and overpowering efficiency in Howard Hawks' *The Big Sleep* carry the spectator along with bewildering but not unpleasant rapidity. Lauren Bacall gives a hint here of the promise she showed in *To Have and Have Not*, but the best performances in this enchanting movie which really moves, (from Raymond Chandler's novel), come from Elisha Cook, Junr., Bob Steele and newcomer Dorothy Malone.

Films to Note:

Les Enfants du Paradis, directed by Marcel Carné, with Arletty, Jean-Louis Barrault and Pierre Brasseur, at the Rialto, Coventry Street.

Day of Wrath, the first Danish film to be seen in England. Directed by Carl Dreyer, with a lovely performance by Lisbeth Movin, at the Academy, Oxford Street.

FILM BOOKSHELF

By OSWALD FREDERICK

The most notable film publication of recent months is that admirable volume entitled *Grierson on Documentary* (Collins, 16s.). Edited, and with an introduction by, Forsyth Hardy, it brings together in one book all the more important of John Grierson's articles and essays on the many aspects of the film. Although the title suggests that the documentary film alone is dealt with here, the editor has brought Grierson's writings on all and every type of film into the book, but nothing has been lost by that. As one reviewer recently said, the book could fairly be called " Grierson on Cinema," but it is through the documentary medium that we have come to know and admire the work of this Scottish-born director, so much so, in fact, that the words Grierson and Documentary have almost become synonymous in this country to the discerning student of the cinema.

This long and comprehensive book is well worth a detailed study. So full of detail is it, and so profusely and all-embracing are its photographic illustrations, that it might well be accepted as a history of all that is best and more intelligent in world film production during the past twenty years.

John Grierson, who in 1939 was appointed Film Commissioner by the Canadian Government, resigned his position at the end of the war and is now back in England, having formed a new documentary film unit. For those to whom his literary work will be new, this collection of his writings will serve, to a great extent, in introducing him to them and in helping them to understand his motives and aims. We welcome back this great pioneer and critic of the documentary, and while his influence on many of the directors who have done such admirable work during the war has been apparent in their work, the personal touch of John Grierson in the documentary films to come should raise the standard of British film production and direction to even greater heights.

A new and refreshing addition to the growing library of film literature is *The Penguin Film Review*, published by Penguin Books and priced at one shilling. It is the first issue of a booklet-magazine which it is intended to issue from time to time until the situation allows it to become a regular publication. Edited by R. K. Neilson Baxter, Roger Manvell and H. H. Wollenberg, the first number contains articles by such outstanding authorities as Anthony Asquith, Michael Balcon, Michael Powell and Richard Winnington. The cinema in America, England, France, Italy and Soviet Russia are all analysed, while there are articles on sub-standard films, the cartoon, film music and technical appreciation, to mention but a little of the contents.

Film Review, like so many of the new publications of its kind, has not neglected the illustrated section, and the photographs in this issue range from such classics as *Battleship Potemkin* and *Greed*, through the middle years with stills from *Blackmail* and *It Happened One Night*, to the wartime milestones and the most recent and worthwhile releases like *Men of Two Worlds* and *The Overlanders*.

Film Review has taken no one particular medium or nation and stressed its achievements in this first number, but later, presumably, the general survey will give place to a more detailed review of the particular aspects of each industry. With the many talented authorities it has at its disposal, *Penguin Film Review's* future issues should be well worth waiting for.

A new series of film books which have gained immediate popularity are World Film Publication's *Books of the Film* (2s. each). Five titles have already appeared, *Gilda, San Antonio, A Night in Casablanca, The Seventh Veil* and *Devotion*. Supplying a demand which was met, in some part, by the old Readers' Library some years ago, the publishers have taken outstanding screenplays and have novelized them, embellishing the books with photographic stills from the film. Thus the filmgoers who have been impressed by any particular story on the screen may settle down in an armchair and "see" the picture again with their mind's eye through the medium of the written word.

Obviously, only films with a strong story to them can be well treated in this fashion, although *A Night in Casablanca* is a remarkable exception, for Groucho's quips and gags, usually too numerous to retain in the memory after seeing the film, are here retained for us to chuckle over again and again. To a rabid Marx Brothers fan, the book is even something of an improvement on the film as shown in British cinemas, for the written version was apparently taken from the script before many of the gags were cut from the celluloid version.

The Seventh Veil is perhaps the best of the present batch of offerings. It is well written, and it contains some twenty excellent photogravure illustrations from this truly remarkable British production. Admirers of the film and of James Mason, Ann Todd and that brilliant young Czech actor, Herbert Lom, will welcome this version of Muriel and Sydney Box's famous screenplay.

The September-October issue of *The Ciné-Technician*, the journal of The Association of Ciné-Technicians, contains such a wide range of articles and information that it sems a pity that it is aimed only at those who are employed in the industry and not to the general public, for its subject matter is far more interesting to the discerning filmgoer than many of the so-called film magazines which flood the market. Is it too much to hope that this magazine may one day be available to all?

Following the great success of his *Film Quiz*, Peter Noble has now produced the second in the series, *Movie Quiz* (Pendulum Publications, 1s. 3d.). The publisher's note suggests that it will

test your film knowledge and improve it, which it certainly will. The booklet contains 500 questions and answers on films and also has an interesting Photo Quiz. A pleasant pastime for evenings when you've seen everything showing at your local cinemas, and certainly a publication which will increase your knowledge of and interest in films and film personalities.

Mr. Noble's "Profiles and Personalities" (Brownlee, 15s.) is an interesting collection of essays on notable figures in literature, art, ballet, music, stage and screen. Readers of "Film Quarterly" publications are already aware of Peter Noble's individual style apparent in his profiles of J. Arthur Rank, Eric Portman, Gabriel Pascal and Carol Reed, which have appeared in previous issues. Some of these are reprinted here, along with essays on James Mason, John Mills, Michael Powell, Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh and others.

Illustrated by photographs, and by drawings by Vicky, of the *News Chronicle*, this is a fascinating volume, and one of Mr. Noble's best books.

Readers of "Film Miscellany" will be interested in a passage in Stephen Frances' new novel, "One Man in His Time" (Pendulum, 7s. 6d.). It deals with the lot of the poor, harassed, guinea-a-day film extra, and this particular helot of the motion picture industry gets his chance of hitting back at his tormentors. The protagonist of this well-written and unusual novel is a young Londoner whose picaresque meanderings eventually lead him to the film studios in search of work. After one exceptionally horrible day, when he has been bullied by the director from morning to evening, he escapes from the studio without bothering to remove his property clothes, which happen to be evening dress. In this garb he gate-crashes an actors' dinner in the Strand, listens in growing rage to the arty talk of the prominent actors in their after-dinner speeches, and finally, with the aid of more wine than is good for him, he rises and delivers a speech himself.

We do not get the verbatim report of that speech, but we are told that the "little man" of moving pictures revolts and tells the big shots a thing or two. The novelist's hero gets the chance that all crowd players and "bit" men dream of having some day. The sergeant-major-like director is slashed to pieces with the impromptu speech the under-dog delivers, and to cap it all, the actors and actresses at the dinner stand and cheer the speaker when it is all over. Stephen Frances effectively reminds us that "being in pictures isn't all honey." We know that the stars and featured players work very hard and that the glamour of fame is largely mythical, but the unfortunate extra, with his guinea one day and nothing at all for the next six days, has a far harder time of it. This novel, which deals with the under-dog in dozens of jobs and positions, is a book well worth reading.

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